

# Timeline's Prime Time Special: *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* (EXPOSED!)

By Gregory T. Burns

## NOTES

Everyone loves a good story, and perhaps no one has the ability to make a story even more sensational than primetime journalists. In his mature, over-the-top satire of primetime news programs, playwright Gregory T. Burns takes a birds-eye view of a fictitious primetime news program, *Timeline's Primetime Special*, whose primary goal is to boost ratings through capitalizing on the misfortune of others. This selection may be performed by a male or a female and be entered in Humorous Interpretation; however, with creative blocking, this play may also be performed by two actors and be entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting. If used in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting, the performers may choose to divide the 'hosting' duties of Mike 'The Milker' Monahan by adding a second on-air journalist. The performance style of this play is similar to that of a bad soap opera; therefore, don't be afraid to really over-exaggerate the 'clips' from the fictitious children's show, *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*. Remember, much of the humor from children's shows stems from the, at times, uncomfortably long pauses, as Ann and Armando wait for the viewers at home to interact with their various rhetorical questions. For those performers looking for a zany comedy that takes a dark look at how we, as a society, are captivated by sensationalistic journalism, you've come to the right place! Now, go for it!

### Characters:

**Mike 'The Milker' Monahan**, a TV journalist

**Ann**, the young co-host of a children's show

**Armando**, the young co-host of a children's show

**Diane**, a mother who recently lost her daughter

**Debbie**, Diane's sister

**Hank**, Diane's husband

**Mike 'The Milker' Monahan:** For generations, Americans have *grown up*—watching educational children's programming. And for most Americans, these seemingly innocent "Kiddie Shows" have taught us how to *read—and write*—and in some cases—even how to tie our *shoes*. They've taught us how to build *character*. And—over the years—the *stars* on these shows have—well, become our *friends*. Tonight, on this *Timeline Primetime Special*, we'll go *undercover*—and show you how one, seemingly innocent children's show—had the power to ultimately *destroy* a woman's *life*—and the lives of her family—one, unsuspecting *victim* at

a time. I'm your host, Mike 'The Milker' Monahan. They call me 'The Milker'—because there's not a journalist on television—who can 'milk' a moment like I can. *(Beat)* So won't you join me, as we *exploit*—yet another American tragedy that will ultimately make you feel *better*—and more *normal*—about your own lives? *(Beat)* If so, then join me—as we EXPOSE: *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando!*



**Mike 'The Milker' Monahan:** Tonight, we ask the question: Can a children's television show—literally *destroy*—a family? The answer—might surprise you. *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* began airing just two short years ago. Recently, the parent company, W.T.F., Incorporated—announced plans to *renew* the disgustingly, trashy series and have declined all interviews for tonight's *Timeline Primetime Special*. So, we've decided we'd like you—our viewers at home—probably sitting at home wrapped up in a *Snuggie*—to see *first-hand*—how a children's show—could have the power—to bring a family to its knees. *(Beat)* It's time to EXPOSE—one of America's biggest blemishes—*The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando*. So, are Ann and Armando—doing more *harm*—than *good*? You be the judge. Let's take a look at this sham—that has the audacity to call itself a children's show.

*(A clip from the show plays on the television)*

**Ann:** Hola, friends! My name is Ann. It's short for *Annoying*.

**Armando:** Good morning, amigos! My name is Armando. It's short for—

**Ann:** *(Interrupting Armando)* No one cares, okay? Moving on. Would you like to come on an adventure with us? Adventures are fun.

**Armando:** What? You can come, but you'll have to ask your parents first?

**Ann:** No, don't do that. Your parents want you to be more independent. They want you to make decisions on your own. Can you say 'emancipation'? So, don't ask for their permission. Just come. It will be all right.

**Armando:** If you're worried you'll get in trouble, leave your parents a note. Get a piece of paper and write, "I'm going to El Salvador with Ann and Armando. If I don't get killed by militant rebels, I'll be back when I'm back."

**Ann:** What? You don't know how to spell El Salvador? Neither do we, so just write, "Love you. Bye." Then they won't worry.

**Armando:** They'll probably just call the police and put out an all-points bulletin on you. And your name and physical description will appear on electronic billboards across the state. You'll be famous!

**Ann:** So come on, we're about to magically appear in El Salvador. Just as

# Timeline's Prime Time Special: *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* (EXPOSED!)

By Gregory T. Burns

soon as we snap our fingers. (*Snap fingers*)

**Armando:** Look! We're in El Salvador!

**Ann:** Look at all the poor people.

**Armando:** They are poor, because they don't have any money.

**Ann:** Money is important. Make sure you always have money, because you may want to buy something—like a souvenir from El Salvador.

**Armando:** Or illegal drugs. Oh, wait. Drugs are only illegal in America. Well, in most states they are. Can you say, 'medicinal purposes'?

**Ann:** Here they are like candy. You like candy, don't you?

**Armando:** But illegal drugs cost money—just like candy costs money.

**Ann:** So, if you want some, you'll have to have money.

**Armando:** Money is power.

**Ann:** Did you know that there is a symbol for money?

**Armando:** What is the symbol, Ann?

**Ann:** Well, Armando, the symbol for money is called—a dollar sign!

**Armando:** A dollar sign?

**Ann:** Yes! Do you know what the dollar sign looks like? It is a big capital "S" with a line going through the top and coming out the bottom. Would you like to make the sign with us?

**Armando:** Let's make the sign together. Okay?

**Ann:** Quick! Make more dollar signs! Make lots and lots of dollar signs as fast as you can!

**Mike 'The Milker' Monahan:** Well, viewers, that doesn't seem so "innocent" to me. Of course, it *seemed* innocent—to the under-educated, viewing audience possibly like you there at home—lounging on the couch in your cute little Snuggies. (*Beat*) But I want you to ask yourselves—what was this show's educational purpose? Honestly, as we review this "kids" show, we can't seem to find one educational or redeeming quality. Could a children's show like *The Amazing Adventures with Ann and Armando* be a *training video* used to recruit future *gang members and criminals*? Could a T.V. show marketed to *toddlers*—be teaching your children how to make—*gang signs*? Well, I know one devastated mother—who seems to believe the answer to that question is—yes. Yes, they can.. (*Beat*) Meet Diane. (*The camera zooms in on Diane's face*) Poor, poor, sad and grieving Diane, what goes through your tortured and regret-filled *mind*—when you see that clip?

**Diane:** (*Hesitantly*) I feel sad. I really do. When I watch that clip—I see two little mean-spirited children—Ann and Armando—two little *hooligans*—who constantly undermine parental *authority*—teaching *other* children things that could get them—

**Mike 'The Milker' Monahan:** Killed? Murdered? Mutilated?

**Diane:** (*Long pause*) Yes.

**Mike 'The Milker' Monahan:** Let's talk about your very dead daughter,