

Former STAR-turned-comedian hits TV airwaves tonight on Comedy Central

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By The STAR Staff

Former STAR staffer-turned-comedian Bill Santiago hits the television airwaves tonight at 10 for the premier of Comedy Central's 10th season of "Comedy Central Presents."

Santiago will perform his original stand-up including a killer impression of singer Shakira "giving birth to an alien."

The comedian also will give his take on the best things about being Latino; number five on his list is "an automatic part in the high school production of 'West Side Story.'"

He also will highlight the breadth of the Latino experience in the United States. "There are differences. Mexicans get shot for trying to get into this country. Cubans get shot for trying to get out of their own country. Puerto Ricans get shot just for trying to have a country" Santiago said in a written statement.

"Comedy Central Presents Bill Santiago" was filmed at New York City's historic Hudson Theater before a mostly Latino audience.

Throughout his routine Santiago mentions "the little frog called *el coquí* and notes that Spanglish has "twice the vocabulary and half the grammar."

"I knew it would go well... because I read my horoscope y ustedes saben que Walter no fallá," Santiago said, referring to the flamboyant astrologer Walter Mercado.

The eldest of four children, Santiago also writes a humor column for Mother Jones Magazine.

Recalling his days as a writer for the STAR's Portfolio section, Santiago said that after narrowly "escaping" a career in journalism, he turned to comedy. "As a comedian I am funny. As a reporter I was a joke," he joked.

Santiago said that even though his father was a lawyer, he grew up eating welfare cheese. "Not because we were on welfare but because a lot of my father's clients couldn't afford to pay him with money, so he would let them pay with whatever they had. It was like a Puerto Rican wampum," he joked.

Santiago also performs a variety of shows around the mainland while continuing to develop his one-man show, "Spanglish 101." He presents the show nationally and is a regular at New York City's Laugh Lounge.



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