

En Espanol

by

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FADE IN.

INT. PIZZERIA IN NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The joint is packed with children just getting out of school. PAPO, an elementary school kid from the inner city, is in line waiting his turn to place his order with the PIZZAIOLO behind the counter. Papo sees the customer being served ahead of him walk away from the counter with his order before walking up, placing crumpled up bills and some loose change on the counter and asking the pizzaiolo for...

PAPO

A plain slice, and small cup of
grape soda, please.

The pizzaiolo sees the money on the counter and leaves it there. He looks at Papo, and decides to give him a hard time instead of getting his order.

PIZZAIOLO

In Spanish.

PAPO

(confused)
Huh?

PIZZAIOLO

Place your order in Spanish.
You're a Spanish kid, right? You
should be speaking Spanish.

PAPO

You're messing with me, right?

PIZZAIOLO

No, I am not messing you. I mean
it. I'm not going to serve you
unless you place your order in
Spanish.

A frustrated Papo is losing his patience with the Pizzaiolo.

PAPO

I don't understand! Why are you
giving me a hard time?! My money
is green! What difference does it
make how I place my order?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIZZAIOLO

You may not see it now, but I'm trying to help you. You'll thank me for it later.

PAPO

My Spanish is not up to snuff, okay?!

PIZZAIOLO

You should be a shamed of yourself. Come back when you're ready to place your order in Spanish.

PAPO

You are without a doubt the most ridiculous man I've ever heard of!

Papo shoots the Pizzaiolo a dirty look, collects his money, and storms out of the pizzeria in a fit.

INT. THE RUIZ'S FAMILY APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The front door to the apartment opens, and Papo steps in from the hallway, locking the door behind him.

INT. THE RUIZ'S FAMILY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

PAPO'S MOTHER is in front of the stove stirring the pot and greets him from there.

PAPO'S MOTHER

Papo, is that you?

PAPO

Yeah, Ma.

PAPO'S MOTHER

How was school?

PAPO

School was fine. It's what happened after school that was crazy.

Papo steps into the kitchen to speak to his mother face to face.

PAPO'S MOTHER

What happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAPPO

Do you know the pizzeria that we're always going to, the one on Broadway?

PAPPO'S MOTHER

Yeah.

PAPPO

Well, I went in there after school, as I always do, and the guy who owns the joint, all of the sudden, refuses to serve me unless I place my order in Spanish? Do you believe that?! It was the craziest thing!

PAPPO'S MOTHER

Don't look at me. I keep telling you to work to work on your Spanish. Next time that happens just tell him that you want un pedazo de pizza y un refresco pequeno.

Papo's mother siding with the Pizzaiolo infuriates him to no end.

PAPPO

That's not the point! Do you think he asks every Spanish person that goes in there to place his or her order in Spanish?! Why did he have to single me out?!

PAPPO'S MOTHER

If you're looking for sympathy from me, you've come to the wrong place, Papo. Maybe now you'll make the time to start working on your Spanish!

Papo can't stand to be under the same roof as his mother and leaves the apartment to go for a walk around the neighborhood.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Papo kicks crushed beer cans down the block and comes across a crowd of mostly White and Black folks listening to KEVIN MORRIS, a politician running for councilman, vying for their votes from behind a podium on a makeshift stage.

KEVIN MORRIS

Now, I have nothing against the foreigners coming into our country, but now they're being hired for customer service jobs, and they can barely speak English.

(to the crowd)

Have you tried to make a reservation at a restaurant lately, or tried to cancel an order you've made over the phone? I had to renew my health plan over the phone the other day, and it now takes me forty-five minutes to do what used to take fifteen minutes.

Papo looks on as the crowd laughs with Kevin Morris, not at him.

KEVIN MORRIS

So, vote for me, Kevin Morris, and, as your councilman, I'll make it impossible for these Spanish speaking foreigners to get a job in customer service.

The crowd applauds.

KEVIN MORRIS

No habla Ingles? Well, then you're shit out of luck! If you want to make a life in this country, you should make the time to speak the language, am I right?

Kevin looks to the crowd for their approval.

KEVIN MORRIS

And that's not all. Make me your councilman, and I'll see to it that English will be the only language to be spoken in schools, in church, or restaurants.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEVIN MORRIS (CONT'D)

That's right! No mas Espanol, por favor! We don't want to hear it anymore!

Papo listening to someone outside of his race speak such awful things about his language doesn't sit well with him. Having heard enough, Papo pulls himself away from the crowd of fools buying into Kevin Morris's rhetoric and heads home with a purpose.

INT. THE RUIZ'S FAMILY APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM -
MOMENTS LATER

Papo looks for his mother and finds her watching TV from her bed.

PAPO

Okay, Ma, tell me again how to say one slice of pizza and a small soda in Spanish.

Papo's mother looks up at him with a smile.

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PIZZAIOLO

What can I get you?

PAPO

Un pedazo de pizza y un coca-cola pequeno.

Pizzaiolo is impressed with Papo.

PIZZAIOLO

So, I did get through to you. You've been practicing, huh? Good for you. Your order is coming right up.

Pizzaiolo collects the money from the counter and serves Papo his order.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIZZAIOLO

Here you are.

Papo takes the slice of pizza and soda and has a few parting words for the pizzaiolo before walking away from the counter.

PAPO

You didn't have to be a scumbag about it, though, humiliating me the way you did!

PIZZAIOLO

Next!

Pizzaiolo laughs and takes the next customer's order.

FADE OUT.