



Press Contact:

Natasha Padilla, WNET

212-560-8824 or padilla@wnet.org

Alison Grand / Gabrielle Torello, Grand Communications for WNET

alison@grandcommunications.com, 212-584-1133 / gab@grandcommunications.com, 201-678-2824

Press materials: <http://pressroom.pbs.org> or <http://www.thirteen.org/13pressroom>

Websites: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/secrets>, <http://www.facebook.com/SecretsoftheDead>, [@secretspbs](https://twitter.com/secretspbs)
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Secrets of Spanish Florida — A Secrets of the Dead Special

*Premieres nationwide Tuesday, December 26 at 9 p.m. on PBS (check
local listings)*

Jimmy Smits Biography

Jimmy Smits continues to move effortlessly between film, TV and stage. His versatile acting has garnered him critical acclaim and 41 award nominations including wins for both Emmy and Golden Globe Awards.

Smits returns to ABC in a guest arc opposite Viola Davis on the fourth season of *How To Get Away with Murder* as well as appear in the upcoming film *Who We Are Now*, written and directed by Matthew Newton, about an ex-con who forms an unlikely alliance with an idealistic lawyer to regain custody of her young son, starring opposite Julianne Nicholson, Emma Roberts and Zachary Quinto.

Most recently, Smits was seen in *24: Legacy*, opposite Miranda Otto and Corey Hawkins, as a powerful U.S. Senator with political aspirations. He also co-starred in Baz Luhrmann's music-driven drama for Netflix, *The Get Down*, a mythic saga of how New York at the brink of bankruptcy gave birth to hip-hop, punk and disco. Smits portrayed Francisco Cruz, aka "Papa

Fuerte”, a South Bronx political boss who delivers services the City fails to provide. Smits notable roles also includes comedy sitcom *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, where Smits plays opposite of Andy Samberg as Amy Santiago’s father, ex-cop Victor Santiago. Smits other unforgettable roles include Neron “Nero” Padilla in the final three seasons of the much-lauded FX show, *Sons of Anarchy*, introduced in Season 5 as an O.G. (original gangster) and self-proclaimed “companionator,” and an unconventional mentor of sorts for Jax (Charlie Hunnam).

In 2010, Smits starred in the NBC drama *Outlaw*, portraying Supreme Court Justice Cyrus Garza, a playboy and risk-taker who has always adhered to a strict interpretation of the law until he realized the system he believed in was flawed. Smits also served as an Executive Producer on the show. He also co-starred in *Mother and Child*, directed by Rodrigo Garcia starring Annette Bening, Samuel L. Jackson and Naomi Watts.

Smits has enjoyed an exemplary television career. In 2009, he finished a Guest Starring stint in Season 3 of Showtime’s hit series *Dexter*, for which he was recognized with his 12th Emmy nomination. In 2008, Smits’ El Sendero Productions company co-executive produced the CBS series, *Cane*, in which he also starred. He also narrated the PBS documentary series, *Latin Music USA*. Coinciding with his *West Wing* Presidency, Smits was also seen in HBO’s multiple award-winning television movie *Lackawanna Blues*, George C. Wolfe’s colorful tale of boarding house life, love, and blues in 1950’s New York.

He received six consecutive Emmy nominations for his role as Victor Sifuentes on *L.A. Law*, winning the Emmy in 1990, and also five Emmy nominations for his role as Bobby Simone on the critically acclaimed, Emmy-winning drama, *NYPD Blue*. Additionally, he received an ALMA Award and an Imagen Award for Best Actor in *The West Wing*, has four Golden Globe nominations—winning as an Actor in a Leading Role, Drama Series, in 1995 for his role in *NYPD Blue*—and four SAG Award nominations. His highly-touted departure from *NYPD Blue* also won the Humanitas Award.

Smits’ filmography includes such early works as Peter Hyams’ *Running Scared* with Gregory Hines and Billy Crystal; John Schlesinger’s *The Believers*; *Old Gringo* with Gregory Peck and Jane Fonda; Blake Edwards’ comedy *Switch*; the critically acclaimed *My Family/Mi Familia*, directed by Gregory Nava, for which he received an IFP Spirit Award nomination; Carlos Ávila’s *Price of Glory*, Chuck Russell’s thriller *Bless The Child*; George Lucas’ *Star Wars: Episode II– Attack of the Clones* and *Star Wars: Episode III– Revenge of the Sith*, Robin Swicord’s *The Jane Austen Book Club* and *El Traspatio (Backyard)*, directed by Carlos Carrera.

Smits began his acting career in the New York theater and returns often. In December, 2012, he starred in Stephen Adly Guirgis’s hit play *Motherf**ker With The Hat* at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He most recently starred on Broadway in the critically acclaimed hit *God of Carnage* (2009). Prior to that he starred on Broadway in 2004 as the romantic new arrival in a Cuban-American cigar factory in Nilo Cruz’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Anna in the Tropics*, preceded by the New York Public Theatre’s Shakespeare in the Park presentations of *Much Ado About Nothing* (2004) and *Twelfth Night* (2002), just to name a few.

Smits has involved himself in various charitable organizations over the years and has consistently been a strong advocate for education. In 1997, he co-founded the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (NHFA), along with actors Esai Morales and Sonia Braga and Washington attorney Felix Sanchez, to promote Hispanic talent in the performing arts. The organization offers graduate scholarships and cash grants at prominent colleges and universities in order to expand career opportunities and increase access for Hispanic artists and professionals while fostering the emergence of new Hispanic talent.