

## Document Citation

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## Amigos (COLOR)

**Humorous, upbeat tale of Cuban refugee.**

A Manicato Films presentation. Produced by Camilo Vila. Executive producer, Marcelino Miyares. Directed by Ivan Acosta. Features Ruben Rabasa, Reynaldo Medina, Lucy Pereda. Screenplay, Acosta; camera (color), Henry Vargas; editor, Gloria Pineyro; music, Sergio Garcia-Marruz; sound, Phil Pear; art direction, Siro Del Castillo; assistant director, Oscar Costo; assistant camera, Orson Ochoa; production manager, Edy Chea. Reviewed at Cine 1, Dec. 19, 1985, N.Y. (No MPAA Rating). Running time: **108 MINS.**

Ramon ..... Ruben Rabasa  
Pablo ..... Reynaldo Medina  
Magaly ..... Lucy Pereda  
Olmedo ..... Juan Granda  
Gavilan ..... Armando Naser  
Cecilia ..... Blanca de Abril  
Mirta ..... Lilian Hurst  
Consuelo ..... Luisa Gil  
Pellon ..... Juan Troya

Also with: Dania Victor, Uva Clavijo, George Prince, Mercedes Enriquez, Celia De Munio, Manuel Estanillo, Ellen Cody, Carlos Bermudez and Tony Calbino.

*(In Spanish with English subtitles)*

This is the first film feature by Cuban-American Ivan Acosta, whose Off-Off Broadway play "El Super" was adapted in a droll, captivating 1979 film by Leon Ichaso ("Crossover Dreams") and Orlando Jimenez-Leal ("Improper Conduct"). Although "Amigos" is slated for initial release at an Hispanic speciality house, the first-rate subtitles indicate the filmmaker hopes for crossover distribution to the mainstream market. While this film about the adjustment of a Cuban refugee from the 1980 Mariel boat flotilla has its share of humor and thematic sharpness, it's less ironic and more loosely structured than "El Super," and seasoned with the type of sentimentality and broad comedy likely to have its greatest appeal in the specialty sector.

After spending 18 years in one of Fidel Castro's prisons simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, born loser Ramon (Ruben Rabasa) is allowed to leave in the Mariel boat exodus for Miami, where he's taken in by childhood pal Pablo (Reynaldo Medina), a suave and successful truck salesman whose family left Cuba in 1958. The world of Miami's well-to-do, hard working Cuban middle class is de-

picted in microcosm here, and the conflict between the comfortable Cuban-American establishment and the Mariel newcomers, stigmatized by the convicts and social outcasts in their midst, is a thematic backbone of "Amigos."

Ruben's life changes overnight as he's accepted immediately into Pablo and his girlfriend Magaly's (Lucy Pereda) cozy circle of friends in bountiful Miami, U.S.A., where, as Pablo says, "there's lot's of bread and the freedom to enjoy it." Balding, self-effacing Ramon is easy-going on the surface, but he's still haunted by his long and terrible prison ordeal. Although he shares a common language and homeland with engaging characters like construction boss Gavilan, undertaker Olmedo and aerobics instructor Magaly (who sets him up on a phenomenally successful blind date) the culture-shocked Ramon feels isolated by his uncommon experiences from their prosperity and hustling American lifestyle.

No one in Miami, it seems, wants to hire *Marielitos*, and gradually Ramon sinks into a depression over his inability to find even the most mundane work. After a short, hilarious stint with Olmedo in the hearse and a boatyard job that ends when

his boss discovers his origins, the guileless Ramon is duped by unsavory criminal Pellon into a scheme to drive stolen goods to Union City, N.J. This puts him in a big jam in the Big Apple from which only his new amigos can hope to rescue him.

There's a funny subplot involving Ramon and his obese ex-wife Consuelo (Luisa Gil) who deserted him in Cuba when he was imprisoned but longs to win him back with witchcraft and womanly wiles. Although Acosta is clearly anti-Castro he neatly satirizes the military fantasies of Cubans who still dream of reconquering the island, and also casts some deft barbs at machismo, materialism and the paradox of cultural assimilation.

Ensemble performances are appealing and location shooting in Miami is keenly evocative of the Cuban-American milieu there.

— Rich.