



Gringo Mask

Is it Halloween already? No, not yet, although for many Hispanic immigrants things seem quite scary in Arizona and for some in the Latino community, the state's governor, Republican Jan Brewer, has assumed the role of big bad witch.

The reason: On April 23, Brewer signed into law a controversial measure, SB 1070, which allows the police to detain anyone whose immigration status may be suspect. And playing into this, of course, is the person's appearance.

So, you don't look the way you should in Brewer's and the police's eyes? No problem! Because here's the solution, free of charge and readily available to anyone: the Gringo Mask!

Whether you are a man or a woman, now you can boast of a perfectly acceptable image for Arizona — you know, light skin, blond hair, blue eyes — without having to resort to expensive bleaching creams like Sammy Sosa or Michael Jackson did, or cumbersome Joan Rivers-type plastic surgery.

And for this you may thank the leaders and the creative team of Zubi Advertising, one of the leading Hispanic advertising agencies in the nation, with headquarters in Miami.

"When we first heard of the law in Arizona and the effects it could have in terms of racial profiling, we discussed at the agency what we could do about it, since we have access to media," says Michelle Zubizarreta, the agency's chief administrative officer and co-owner along with her brother Joe. "How can we address the issue, but do so in a creative way while at the same time delivering a message?"

Ergo, the mask.

"What caught our attention was the absurdity of this law, and the notion that we all must look a certain way," continues the Cuban-American executive. "Once we talked about it, my creative team came back with the idea of the mask and the website [which went live on April 30. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are also being used to spread the word]. Basically, this is all a satire of what is happening in Arizona."

To take part in this satire, all you have to do is go to www.gringomask.com, choose the mask that best applies to you, download for free, print it, cut it, put an elastic band around it and ... bingo! New face, new immigration status!

"The spirit in which we conceived Gringo Mask," clarifies Zubizarreta, "was not to offend anyone. We wanted to start a dialogue."