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Selena Quintanilla 21st Death Anniversary: 21 Things You Didn't Know About Movie Based On 'Queen Of Tex-Mex' Life

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By **Maria G. Valdez** Mar 27 2016, 11:06PM EDT



The cast and director of the new film "Selena" pose for photographers March 13, 1997 in Hollywood at the film's premiere. Shown (L-R) are Jon Seda, Jennifer Lopez, Edward James Olmos, director Gregory Nava and Constance Marie. The film chronicles the life of Selena, the popular Tejano music star who was murdered at age 23 in 1995. Reuters

It's hard to believe it's been 21 years since Selena Quintanilla, the [Queen Of Tex-Mex](#) was killed by Yolanda Saldívar, her friend and former employee. March 31, 1995 might've been the physical death of Selena, but her music and legacy is still relevant, and 21 years after her untimely passing, we still remember her contributions to music and fashion, which made her one of the most celebrated Mexican American entertainers of the end of the 20th century. Another way to remember her life is through the movie "Selena," directed by Gregory Nava and starring Jennifer Lopez in the lead role.

The movie has become so iconic, but it was also hard for the cast. "It was difficult to be doing the story of a person who was murdered, who was so iconic in her world, and it was only about 14 months after

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her death that we started shooting it. It was very difficult to be happy because we already knew where we were going with the story," Edward James Olmos [told me](#) a while ago, when I asked him about the most difficult character he's had to play. If you remember, in "Selena," he portrays Abraham Quintanilla, Selena's father and manager and the Quintanilla family patriarch.

Remembering Selena the singer, and the movie that so many of us love, here are 21 things you didn't know about the film.

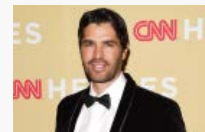
1. The Quintanilla family chose to make the movie to [prevent having unauthorized biopics](#) released, which were already in production.
2. More than 22,000 girls auditioned for the roles of Selena at different ages.
3. Salma Hayek was considered for the role of Selena, but she refused because she wanted to play Frida Kahlo in "Frida" (2002) and did not wish to play two different Mexican heroines.
4. Besides Hayek, among the actresses considered to play Selena were Leticia Miller, an unknown who bore a striking resemblance to the Queen of Tejano Music, and Bibi Gaytán, a Mexican telenovela actress. Coincidentally, Selena had guest-starred on a telenovela Gaytán starred in, called "Dos mujeres, un camino."
5. Director Gregory Nava had to fight to get Lopez the role because Warner Bros. was talking to other non-Latina actresses to play Selena.
6. When Jennifer Lopez signed on to be Selena, she thought she was going to do the singing as she was requested to sing and dance at her audition. However, since the movie would be released so soon after Selena's death, movie execs and the Quintanilla family felt her fans would not approve of hearing any voice other than hers. Lopez was coached to lip-sync.
7. Jennifer Lopez only sang three words in the entire film. It was during the Monterrey concert scene where she begins the slow version of "Como La Flor."
8. To prepare for her role, Jennifer Lopez lived with Selena's family. She moved in with Suzette Quintanilla in Corpus Christi, Texas.
9. Jennifer Lopez became the highest-paid Latina in Hollywood history by playing Selena, earning a then-unheard of, \$1,000,000.
10. Jennifer Lopez and Constance Marie play mother and daughter, when in real life, Constance Marie is only four years older.
11. Constance Marie is 46 days younger than Jackie Guerra, who plays her daughter, Suzette Quintanilla in the movie.
12. Jackie Guerra wanted the part of Selena's sister, Suzette so badly that she lied at her audition, saying that she was an experienced drummer, when in fact she had never played the drums. After the truth was revealed, the real Suzette gave her private lessons.
13. Jon Seda, who plays Selena's husband Chris Perez, was unable to play the guitar like the real Perez, so for the scene where he first appears, the hands seen in the close-up playing the guitar, are actually Perez's.
14. Abraham Quintanilla wanted director Gregory Nava to remove the scene where Selena and Chris Perez elope because he "didn't want Selena's fans to think that [eloping] is the right thing to do."
15. Lupe Ontiveros, who played Yolanda Saldivar, Selena's killer, was 54 when she did the movie, when

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Saldívar was 34 at the time of Selena's death.

16. The studio where "I Could Fall In Love" is recorded in the movie, is Studio A in Q-Productions, where Selena actually recorded her English Album.

17. The Houston Astrodome concert scene was actually shot at the San Antonio Alamodome, and 35,000 extras were not paid but actually given coupons for free Coke product.

18. Film used approximately 64,000 fans/extras including the stadium scene.

19. Abraham Quintanilla wanted the film to stop short of depicting Selena's murder, but Nava insisted it was "dramatically necessary."

20. At the end of the film, when archive footage of Selena is shown, there are shots of fans mourning her and holding pictures of the actual Selena.

21. Jennifer Lopez got engaged to Ojani Noa at the wrap party for the movie at the Hard Rock Cafe in San Antonio.

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Born and raised Dominican living in New York (do not confuse with Dominican-York), who claims to be Sofia Vergara's long lost daughter and who has an unhealthy obsession with JLo. Associate Editor of Latin Times, overseeing the editorial operation and content strategy of the website. Trained journalist and musical theater performer with solid entertainment instincts. Experience covering human interest stories and social and large scale events with focus on Latino entertainment. Maria began her career in journalism in her native Dominican Republic where she worked for Ritmo Social, one of the country's most prestigious