

# **The NTCC Webb Chapter Venture into Niche Cinema: Filming the Un-Filmed Legends of Texas**

**The Webb Chapter of Northeast Texas Community College**

**President Emma Mendoza**

**January 2026**

Chapter Research Project:  
**The NTCC Webb Chapter Venture into Niche  
Cinema: Filming the Un-Filmed Legends of  
Texas**

*To view the finished work of the NTCC Webb Society on its  
Texas history films in the Year **2025**:*

*Crude Conquest, on Big Oil, and  
Texas Politics in the Mid-Twentieth Century*

&

*The Trailer for our Newest Film: **Chicano Thermidor:**  
Art and Identity in San Antonio 1970 - 1995*

Query:



Or Follow the Link:

<https://www.ntcc.edu/honorsfilms>

*To view the developing rough draft of the upcoming film, **Chicano  
Thermidor**, query*

*<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nggqOvkWxh0&t=309s> > on  
YouTube or type **<Chicano Thermidor Film>** on YouTube.*

*Premiere Date: 20 February 2026, 7 p.m., At the Whatley Center for the Performing Arts at Northeast Texas Community College*

## A) The Scope of the Undertaking:<sup>1</sup>

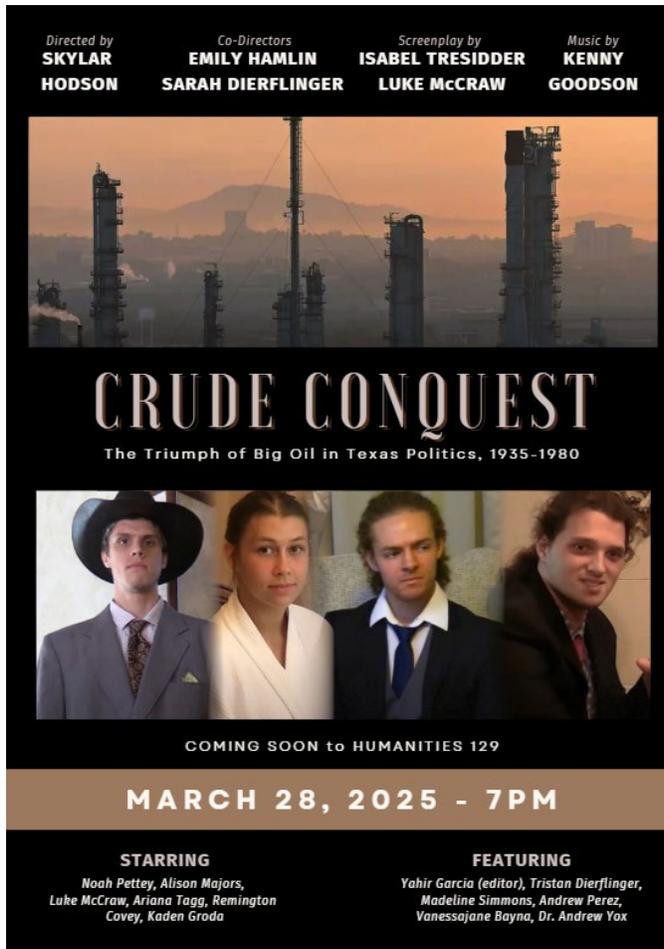
We began in January of 2025 planning for our 28 March premiere of *Crude Conquest, Big Oil, and Texas Politics in the Mid Twentieth Century*. This work was based on the Caldwell-Award winning research of Vanessajane Bayna, a year earlier. We believed that toxification in Texas was a worthy theme. As Bayna had noted, our power plants, ozone levels in the big cities, and TRAP (Traffic Related Air Pollution) gas quotients were beginning to cast a pall over our future as Texans. The extent to which Big Oil came to dominate Texas politics from 1930 to the Republican takeover with William Clements in 1979 was also an intriguing story, which our film highlighted. On the other hand, our great enabler of the film, Mr. David L. Stevenson, from Longview, was the CEO of *Custom Transport* and the owner of 600 trucks! Our semi-rural region has been more than just a little oblivious to toxification. We have lost in the last thirty years, our chicken empire, with Pilgrim's, a coal power plant, and for practical purposes, the income of Lone Star Steel. Many of the residents of our college's service delivery area would just assume hope that we had a little more toxification, if it only could come from prosperity. We hoped the film could attract attention, but also, avoid attracting a concomitant backlash.

Our report last year to the education office of the Texas State Historical Association contains many details about the scope of this particular film, so we will not belabor this

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<sup>1</sup> Our series creating previously un-filmed stories of Texas, includes a two-year cycle for each film. We are including in this report our film-developing activity for the year 2025, on the two films. From January to March, we underscore, feature and premiere the film of the previous year. From March to December, we work on the yearly film, developing the script, filming the action, and editing the scenes. These materials include our premiere and publicity outreach for the *Crude Conquest*. We plan to have similar finishing materials for our *Chicano Thermidor* film, materials that we will be developing in the upcoming weeks.

information again, but rather focus more on our newer 2025 film below, which was similar in scope. Still, getting ready for the premiere itself involved several steps.



*Emily Hamlin's Movie Poster for our March 2025 Premiere*

We were thankful first of all that our trusty cinematographer, Emily Hamlin, volunteered to create the movie poster for the premiere. Hamlin came to Texas from Oregon and was homeschooled. Ironically, she won our Northeast Texas poetry contest in the fall of 2024 with a poem about Texas traditions. In any event, she was very conscientious and came up with a movie poster that combined some of our honors-student, Webb actors, and a theme-image (left).

We have been supremely fortunate through the years to also have a disc jockey on our side, who can get us on his popular radio show and talk about our film. The premiere of 2025 was no exception to this rule, and the students had a lively session with Collins Knighton on his K-Lake morning show. They described their efforts to make our actor taking on Lyndon Johnson, look intoxicated, how we filmed in Jefferson, Texas late into the evenings, and how on the last day, our director Skylar Hodson, had stayed so busy that she

had been unable to dress out of her pajamas. This was the kind of information that Knighton seemed to enjoy, and show loped past quickly with a humorous gait:



*Above: Members of our Webb Chapter with Collins Knighton, March 2025*

We plugged for the film as well with a press release, social media announcements, and a Lunch and Learn appearance at our local library. Here, associate producer, Yahir Garcia spoke about the coming film, and showed the film's trailer (See below):

**NTCC SCHOLARS WILL PRESENT  
THEIR REGIONAL THEMED  
ESSAYS**

**ARACELI LANDAVERDE**  
  
A new interpretation of  
Hispanic Catholicism in  
Texas

**STEPHANIE HERNANDEZ**  
  
The Untold Story of  
Tejano Murals

**MARY-FAITH WILSON**  
  
Cowboy Conservation in  
the Novels of Elmer  
Kelton and Larry  
McMurtry

**YAHIR GARCIA**  
  
The Making of the New  
Honors Film: Crude  
Conquest: Toxification and  
the Triumph of Big Oil in  
Texas Politics, 1935-1980

**Mt. Pleasant Library 2025**

**LUNCH  
AND  
LEARN**

**FEBRUARY 7, 2025**  
**12:15-1:15**

*Mt. Pleasant Public Library at 601 North Madison*

**FREE salad, pizza and drink  
provided for those who RSVP to  
Dr. Yox at [ayox@ntcc.edu](mailto:ayox@ntcc.edu)**

*Join us!*

**This event is free and open to  
the public in the community  
room of the Mt. Pleasant Library**

**N** NORTHEAST TEXAS  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

While we were working on advertising, our favorite regional composer, Kenny Goodson, was working on the score. Goodson is not only is a fluent composer, he is a former director of computer services at the college. These multiple talents allow him to combine musical skill with composition software, and tone generators, good enough to create an orchestra of sound and more. This was the sixth film that Goodson has scored for us. Now in January of 2026, he is scoring his seventh! He is an honorary member of our Webb Society several times over, for he has not only acted in our films, and attended some of our film trips, but has narrated several trailers. He is also married to Annie, a former honors student of our college who has helped with costuming in several of our films.<sup>2</sup>



*Film Score Composer, Kenny Goodson of Hughes Springs, Texas*

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.ntcc.edu/news/2025/northeast-texas-composer-kenny-goodson-lends-talent-latest-honors-northeast-film>

The end result of our efforts was an audience of 60 that attended our premiere on 28 March (below). As for anticipated criticism, no one stepped forward to do this.



We showed the trailer for our donors in April, one month later, and David L Stevenson was very gracious about it, saying he respected our work, and would like to contribute again to our film series. Other donors were also very supportive, among them Jerald and Mary Lou

Mowery of Mount Vernon, Texas, who have been giving funds every year, as well as special support since 2014, below:



*Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery of Mount Vernon, Texas*

Just as we pivoted away from the film about oil, the meeting of the T.S.H.A. in Houston in March of 2025 was helping to establish a path for our next film. Our student, Stephanie Hernandez, a former art major, won a first-place Caldwell essay award for her pioneering work on Tejano murals. This magnificent award led some of us to wonder, might this provide a direction for our next film? But how could we do a film on murals? As we contemplated these questions, Stephanie, kept on winning. In fact, she became the most successful student scholar in our college's history. After Houston, her mural project, now in poster form, won a Britt Award at the meeting of the Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC) in Denton. (John Britt, by the way, was not only a standout honors director at Lee College, and thus among those in the GPHC, he was a fabulous Webb Society leader, and for many years Lee College dominated the awards of the Webb Society. John Britt also helped shape

the way our honors program and Webb Society at NTCC would one day operate). Stephanie also won a Red River Symposium Award, a McGraw Hill Poster Award, and a Portia Gordon Award of the East Texas Historical Association—five scholarly awards totaling over \$1,000 in seven months. Her work also won acceptance for a presentation at the November meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council in San Diego.



*Stephanie Hernandez, and her Caldwell-Award winning work in Poster Form at Denton at the Great Plains Honors Council last March*

Stephanie told her story about the Tejano murals, how the theme of protest shifted to that of pride over time. She appeared at the Mount Pleasant Public Library in February, and then before donors in May. But as she did this, we still were not finished with our film on toxification. Yahir Garcia, our associate producer, spoke about our film at the meeting of the Walter Webb Society meeting at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Houston on 1 March, in Denton at the Great Plains Honors Council on 8 March, before donors during a special Thank-You dinner in April when Mr Stephenson was present, at the East Texas Historical Association in October in Nacogdoches, and finally in the film panel we had at the National Collegiate Honors Council in San Diego on 8 November 2025. Here we had a Texas history film panel

to ourselves at a national conference. Stephanie Hernandez was there to talk about the film her history of murals had inspired, but we also featured the toxification trailer, and its opening scene.



*Yahir Garcia, associate producer of our film, [Crude Conquest](#), speaking in San Diego. Stephanie Hernandez sits at the table between our summer film director, Emma Mendoza, and Andrew Higgins*

Our story is jumping ahead a little bit here, but in a yearly review of our Texas history film initiative, both sides of the film coin keep on appearing, sometimes unexpectedly—what we have done, and what we hope to do. When a film is finished it becomes a lucrative commodity. Every scholarly meeting or honors conference, every poster contest, or whenever we have donors, or community members who want to learn more about us, the film offers presentation possibilities for honors students. Then we have audiences who ask about our next film. Thus, we become motivated to spin out new films, even as we are presenting the one most recently completed.

By May of 2025, we were sold on Hernandez’s ideas, and had a director, Emma Mendoza, committed to carrying the project through. Ironically the two had been rivals: Mendoza had bested our superstar, Hernandez in the McGraw Hill Poster contest, and Stephanie had to settle for \$300 and second place. In any case, we knew we had a theme, but as for a concrete story, we needed more research. Hernandez provided the first state history of Tejano murals, but the lines of connection between murals and artists that stretched from Houston to El Paso were still fairly mysterious. She had pointed to San Antonio as the center for Mexican American art in the state, and to San Antonio we decided to go. We tried to get help from the Mexican American Studies Department of the University of Texas, San Antonio, and had the money to arrange for a dinner with any official there. But they were very busy, and with the onset of summer, on to other things. We made a bid then to connect with the downtown San Antonio library. Though pressed with countless public demands, the public library staff was very helpful. Particularly helpful, was Lucia Agado of the Texana Room on the first floor of the main library. We found that the site of the wonderful Walter Webb meeting in the Fall of 2024 in San Antonio—the Menger Hotel, offered great summer rates, and proximity to the central library.

Our research trip to San Antonio, 28-30 May, consisted of Webb Director Yox, three incoming students—Bree Fite, Litzy Flores, and Adam Richards, and Emma Mendoza our film director. We were out on a limb to the extent that we really had no concrete sense of how well the library had preserved materials about the Hispanic art scene. But the trip led to the examination of a marvelous cache, a collection we felt very fortunate to survey. The public library had newspaper files on the development of San Antonio murals since the 1930s!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> San Antonio Public Library, Texana Room. Newspaper Files on “Murals” “Art” and “Artists.”



*Bree Fite, Emma Mendoza, Litzy Flores, and Adam Richards at the San Antonio Public Library, May 2025*

Certainly here, amidst all these old newspaper articles, we would find our story! And yet as we worked, we found that the journalism was not as concerned with the murals themselves or the artists, as we would have surmised. They did refer to Hispanic art organizations, which often tried to supervise the mural culture, and what they cared about. Moreover, we found a book on the Hispanic art scene, and it was not about the murals. It was about a Chicano art association that had actually been more interested in paintings, than murals—Con Safo.<sup>4</sup> This was interesting, as the artists in this circle, such as Mel Casas, and Felipe Reyes, had some very flamboyant thoughts about Tejano culture, and the larger Anglo culture around them. We also learned that the Chicano viewpoint was more than balanced by other Hispanic organizations which wanted an art of pride rather than protest, an art that

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<sup>4</sup> Ruben C. Cordova, *Con Safo: The Chicano Art Group and the Politics of South Texas*. (L.A.: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2009).

would involve the youth and raise the status of the west side neighborhoods. We soon began to see how Hernandez’s “protest to pride” theme was also embodied in the conflicting visions of two Mexican American art associations, *Con Safo*, and the Community Culture Arts Organization (CCAO). The latter even had ties with the exciting tenure of Henry Cisneros, the celebrity Mayor of San Antonio, who would later become HUD Secretary under the Clinton Administration. That the CCAO would eventually triumph, and *Con Safo*, fall by the waist side—this would both vindicate Hernandez’s idea, and give us our story.

Our film story will in a sense resume in the next section which discusses the procedures followed. To round out this first section about the scope of the project, it should be noted that the film project involves us with twelve months of deadlines. Conference proposals, newsletters, letters to donors, requisitions to spend money, itineraries, recruitment, a spotting list for our composer (musical requests per scene), a script, memorization of the script, film dinners, reservations to stay at B&Bs, movie posters, and press releases all come around the calendar with various degrees of time pressure. This report will provide some evidence of how this works, and will include the following as attachments:

- ✓ Press Releases Involving Film work for the year, 2025
- ✓ The NTCC Honors Newsletter, *Alacrity* for the summer of 2025, showing three Webb film veterans on the cover, **Skylar Hodson** (director of the toxification film), **Vanessajane Bayna** (whose Caldwell-Award-winning project inspired the toxification film) and **Monse Rivero** (an actor and director of our previous film on the traveling preachers of early Texas) all winning major honors.
- ✓ A Summer of 2025 Letter to Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery
- ✓ A Christmas Greeting to David L. Stevenson
- ✓ Stephanie Hernandez’s Caldwell-Award winning essay.
- ✓ The itineraries of the 2025 film trips to San Antonio, and Jefferson
- ✓ The purchase order for the 2025 summer trip to Jefferson

- ✓ The final script of the 2025 film on art and identity in San Antonio

### **B) Its Purpose:**

The overall purpose of our film work is to unify and uplift. We hope to: 1) educate members of our community and indeed ourselves about significant Texas history themes, 2) highlight various regional legends that can bring us together, and encourage discussion and regional/patriotic spirit, 3) enable students to enhance their résumé of citations, and talents, and 4) to build our Webb-Honors group into an ongoing team with a common, year-long reference point.

#### **Educating Members of our Community:**

Both the toxification and San Antonio art narratives were new, not in the sense that the basic material for the stories had yet to be discovered, but new in the way the stories were told, and in the way the narratives, dramatized. In most cases, the story of big oil's triumph in Texas has not been framed before in the way we were able to frame it. Texas moved from possible control over oil with Governor James Allred, to deal-making with Lyndon Johnson, and Ralph Yarborough, and finally to outright support of Big Oil with the gubernatorial success of William Clements, and the Republican Party. We were dependent on Robert Caro's books on Lyndon Johnson, and the story of the *Big Rich* by Bryan Burroughs, but the particular way of chronologizing our story on the level of state politics was new. Over the story of Texas murals, and Mexican American art, we believe our Webb Society students have charted a more pioneering path. The basic stories of the Tejano murals, and the dueling Mexican-American San Antonio art associations have not been told before. Therefore, we believe we have taught the public something with each presentation.

#### **Highlight Legends that Bring Us Together:**

As noted above, we feared that the toxification film might invite a backlash. But though we have a conservative area politically to work with, viewers were apt to give our film's concern the benefit of the doubt. People were curious about Lyndon Baines Johnson, and our scholar, Luke McCraw, anxious to try his hand with being William Clements.<sup>5</sup> The people in our community did not say "toxification" or the control of Big Oil is "no big deal." They were more apt to question how prosperity in the modern age is possible if one is also environmentally obsessed. Some, even seem proud of our oil, despite its assault on the environment. In any case the premiere in March of this film turned into a kind of celebration of our students, and director, Skylar Hodson, who won a bouquet for her efforts, was very pleased afterward. She wants some day to be a film director. As for the film about Mexican Americans and art, this was really needed. We are now a Hispanic-serving institution with over 35 percent of our students Hispanics. We have a new Mexican American campus association for the first time, *Raíces y Alas*. The largest city in our service delivery area (SDA), Mount Pleasant, now is majority Hispanic, and our largest SDA high school, Mount Pleasant High School, overwhelmingly Hispanic.

### **Enable Students to Build Résumés:**

We have mentioned above how our *Alacrity* newsletter indicates how Skylar Hodson, Vanessajane Bayna, and Monse Rivero benefitted from participation in our films. In each case, their stories were enhanced by their participation, and they went on to win higher accolades. Already with our newest film, we have seen the benefits of this. Emma Mendoza won a Star Award last summer with the Texas Phi Theta Kappa, and the report that helped her win that award mentioned her direction of the film. Also, she is about to win a \$200 Florio leadership Award, thanks in direct measure to her film work, and a generous donor of honors at NTCC.

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<sup>5</sup> Luke McCraw who won the excellent scholarships to attend Dallas Baptist University was a major help to our toxification film. He eagerly wrote the scenes involving Governor Clements and then acted them with dispatch, a flair for Clements' flamboyant emotions, and a perfect memory.

Araceli Landaverde won a Dr. Walter Cooper scholarship with Texas PTK this past fall, and her role in the San Antonio film was part of her backstory. José Fuentes, who plays Chicano artist, Mel Casas in our upcoming film, Araceli Landaverde, who plays west side councilwoman, Maria Berriozábel, and Stefanie Hernandez who plays Selena Quintanilla, and who inspired the film—all had a more propitious story for their recent in-depth applications for the Jack Kent Cooke, and the fall PTK All-USA, Coca Cola forms.

### **Webb Team Building:**

The film is always a larger effort than honors at NTCC can muster on its own. Honors may have the money, but perhaps our best actors in the film effort this past summer: Tristan Dierflinger as Anastacio Torres, Madeline Simmons as Cynthia Garza, and Alison Majors as Rosie Castro, came from outside honors. Those three, in addition to honors student, Ian Mares, were probably our best actors. What we call “Filmweek” in August in particular generates its own pure Webb community, and it is this group that helps us to market the film, and make it more of a phenomenon on campus.



Above left: Alison Majors filming on the campus of NTCC. Above right: Tristan Dierflinger, and Madeline Simmons in the Kennedy Manor of Jefferson sipping a concoction of coke and water to look like wine as members of the victorious CCAO

### **C) Procedures Followed:**

Our basic film procedure is research (which was discussed above), the organization of an executive committee, script formation, the reach-out to fill the needs of casting, rehearsals, filming, production, and the non-diagetic musical overlay.

In each of these areas, there were notable developments in 2025:

**Executive Committee:**

Our first effort to get organized last summer seemed to go well. We had a good group meet at Starbucks in Mount Pleasant—twice in June, thanks to our donors.



*Our Film Organization Meeting at Starbucks in June, 2025*

These preliminary free coffee bars are very helpful in gathering recruits from incoming honors students. First-year honors students usually always have to take Texas history in the fall, and therefore have a mild interest from the beginning in film participation. The offering of no-pressure-to-join coffee hours tends to kindle friendships which work to promote the building of a team. Above it was stated that Honors needs outside students to do the film. Another truth is that the base of honors at NTCC is not that big. Only twenty-five students are in honors at any one time. Last summer the free coffees and film dinner helped encourage twelve of the twenty-five to participate in the Webb film effort in some way. We also, thanks to donors, have a film dinner, a dinner we have to ourselves as long as our people can tolerate

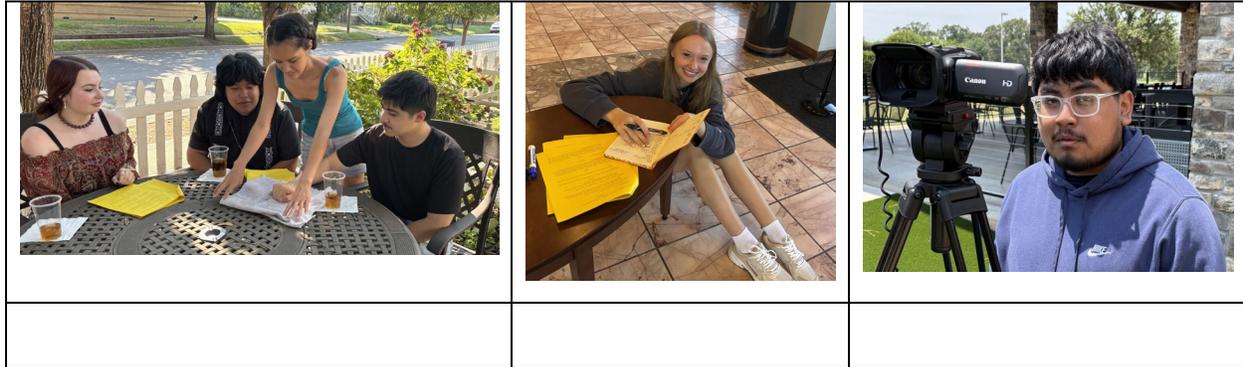
85-degree heat on a patio. (Thus we do not have to pay for a private room). Below we see the annual film dinner last July at Nardello's restaurant on the square in Mount Pleasant.



**Script:** Unlike the free-for-all that developed for the film on toxification, where various actors each developed their own parts like fiefdoms, our newest film effort involving the San Antonio Tejano organizations was much more controlled. Dr. Yox, who was also familiar with Stephanie Hernandez's essay, worked with Emma Mendoza on the plot. Hernandez, our original film scholar, meanwhile did research on the Black Buffalo Myxos, a parasite, in the Arkansas river, and recently co-published two articles—just in time for her Jack Kent Cooke application. She is a biomed major, but she did come in at the last moment to play the key role of Selena Quintanilla in the film. One local valedictorian was going to take on much of the script, but she became very ill, and as it turned out, was not able to survive her first semester in honors. Another local valedictorian invited to help with the script, was on the road to dropping honors, and heading in a direction that would involve her taking only the necessary pre-requisites for nursing. Mendoza and Yox, however, who worked together for Mendoza's victorious poster work on sewing machines, have a good working relationship.

Our **Casting Outreach Success Quotient** this past summer was successful, better than with the toxification effort. Emma Mendoza chose Hailey Randall, a studious and

talented pre-law student from New York to be our Unit Production Director. Johnathan Ventura, a quiet pre-engineer student, who wore a hoodie throughout the hottest of summer days, agreed to be our lead cinematographer, and he was very reliable. We had a strong acting



*Webb Film Leaders: Emma Mendoza with crew of Con Safo, Hailey Randall, and Johnathan Ventura*

team with perhaps one exception.<sup>6</sup> One first year student had it in her to be a fine actor, but she became very sick right before filmweek. But Alison Majors stepped in at this juncture, and did an amazing job. She played the vital part of Rosie Castro—the mother of current heavyweights in the Democratic Party of Texas—Julian, and Joaquin. Seldom have we ever been saved with such a fine actor coming in at the last minute. We were also delighted with our key protagonist. José Fuentes, an incoming honors student who is also a Texas Regional Vice President of Phi Theta Kappa, found the time to be the film’s central Chicano artist, Mel Cases. He also purchased a true guayabera shirt for the film, unlike an artificial simulacrum of one that was the only thing our costume procurer could find at the *Target* and *Kohl’s* of Longview, Texas (See below).

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<sup>6</sup> The student in question made no effort to use Spanish phrases that were in the script. It was not because of bigotry, however, but simply because he did not take the time to study his lines adequately.



*Fuentes and his Guayabera Shirt*



*Cast and Crew that Initiated Film Week: Jasmine Landaverde, Dr. Andrew P. Yox—Webb Director, Andrew Perez, Johnathan Ventura—cinematographer, José Fuentes, Remington Covey, Hailey Randall—unit production director, Ian Mares, Bree Fite, Araceli Landaverde, and Emma Mendoza—Director. In Jo's Coffee Shop, Downtown Mount Pleasant. Photo by **Hudson Old** and the East Texas Journal. 1 August 2025.*

### **Practices and Filming:**

Webb Director Yox was hopeful that this year scenes would be shot more efficiently than last two summers, when in 2023, the filming dragged through Nacogdoches, and went on into the months of October and November, and then last summer, in 2024, when we made it through only half of the film, and had to rely on narrations, and special insertions to achieve a feature-length film. Emma Mendoza and Hailey Randall did an excellent job of moving through the needed scenes, and Ventura was very meticulous with the sound.



*Our Webb set in Mount Pleasant filming an historic encounter between two artists, the great San Antonio muralist, Jesse Treviño—played by Andrew Perez, and the Chicano Artist, Felipe Reyes—played by Ian Mares. Because of unanticipated train noise in Mount Pleasant this scene was not used, and another scene like it had to be shot in Jefferson, Texas.*

The film team finished film week in Jefferson, just short of one scene. It was Friday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. Many in the cast and crew had woken up and filmed early before the breakfasts of the B&Bs on Thursday, and Friday, both to fit in all the scenes, and to allow José Fuentes, who had, a PTK event, to leave early. Everyone was tired and hot, but we had purchased three tomatoes for this special scene where Chicano activist Rosie Castro meets Maria Berriozábel (of the CCAO) in a *Supermercado*, and blows off steam by whipping a tomato at Maria. As the group was heading home, someone in Emma Mendoza's car espied an abandoned storefront and parking lot in Cass County. We decided to alight, with someone in the support crew passing out bottled waters. The asphalt was superhot. But we filmed the scene. The way Araceli Landaverde, playing Maria, seemed to channel the hot tension of the moment into her putdown of Rosie—this made everyone laugh. It became the iconic scene of the film.

At the end of film week, 100 hours of filming were all contained on two, very expensive, little SD cards. Jonathan Ventura, faithfully fed them into his new laptop which

his honors scholarship helped pay for. His assignment for Texas History 2301, then, was not to write an original essay on a Texas-history theme, but to edit the film. This he did, finishing a trailer by the time of the Webb Meeting in Georgetown, and finishing the entire film by December. He then gave the finished film to Yox on an external drive, while Yox handed over the “locked” version of the film to our composer Kenny Goodson. Once again, we did not take every precaution. The external drive that went from Ventura to Yox to Goodson was the only copy of the film. Nevertheless, Goodson, as fluent with technology as he is with composition, immediately got the film on to the internet cloud, so it could exist for multiple users. Goodson received a Spotting List from Yox about how the scenes were being envisioned, and went from there to score the scenes. By the time of this report, Goodson had completed eighteen minutes worth of music. The Premiere is set for 20 February 2026 at 7 p.m. at the Whatley Center for the Performing Arts.



*Last Scene by an Abandoned Storefront in Cass County, 8 August 2025*

#### **D) Findings:**

Last year’s report concentrated on the findings of the film on oil; this year’s looks at *Chicano Thermidor*. Perhaps the most interesting revelation of the film research, and its compilation into a script this year was the way the more centrist CCAO organization had ties with celebrity Mayor, Henry Cisneros, and a progressive wing of west-side businessmen. The

story of west side's renewal was a great chapter in American urban history. When CBS reporter, Charles Kuralt, did a report on the westside in 1968, it was regarded as an intractable ghetto. But when Cisneros insisted on living there, becoming its councilman, and then Mayor, investment began to pour into the district. The CCAO, getting its cues from the pro-Cisneros councilwoman, Maria Berriozábel, was an arm of this uplift, and an opponent of an opposite tack, Con Safo, and its brand of Chicano, art activism. The death of Con Safo came with the area's uplift, and with the need of the community to pivot from protest to pride. The end of the story also came with the elevation of Cisneros, not only into a place of honor among America's Mayors, but to President Bill Clinton's HUD Secretary in 1993.

### **E) Conclusions:**

The death of Con Safo so resembled the experience of other harder-edged ethnic organizations that we decided to begin our film, not on the Hispanic west side in 1970, but in San Antonio's King William District in 1915. There, two of our actors who represented the Hispanic organizations later in the film, Jose Fuentes, and Tristan Dierflinger, played two German-Americans, one Julius Goebel, a German-American activist from Illinois, played by Fuentes, and another, an actual ringleader of San Antonio's Germandom before the war, Robert Penniger, played by Dierflinger. This film prelude established the basic theme to come that Americanization in Texas has come with economic progress, and the loss of ethnic cultural trademarks. Thus, in the finale of the closing scene the dialogue between the Chicano diehards, Mel Casas, and Felipe Reyes, goes like this:

#### **Mel Casas**

I still think the Anglos are damn fortunate to have such a large servant class. But you're right Felipe, if we can get past the unfairness, and the discrimination, our people will have more opportunity. We will see the Henry Cisneroses, the Jesse Treviños, and Selenas of the future, taking over everything, even if their own heritage sinks into oblivion.

#### **Felipe Reyes**

*Resignedly*

I guess that's what you call the American way.<sup>7</sup>

**F) Significance:**

The Ahom Kingdom that lasted from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries A.D. provides the interesting case of a civilization that began with one culture (Chinese-Tai), and basically morphed into a second (Indian). Our research and film focused on a kind of Mexican American epicenter, San Antonio's west side, in the late-twentieth century. The art organization that was vested in the effort to reclaim past Mexican traditions, *Con Safo*, had great artists, and sophisticated perspectives. But they could not survive—even on San Antonio's west side—in the overriding face of Hispanic interest in prosperity, neighborhood uplift, and law and order. Mexican Americans were not disinterested in their past, but they were more interested in other initiatives. Hispanics recently became the plurality group of Texas, surpassing Anglos. But the drift of Texas society thus in this case at least is not toward a kind of Ahom transformation, but to a continued preoccupation with survival in a high-pitched, Texas capitalist society, and the attainment of basic amenities. At the same time, this shorn, centrist, Tejano culture looks different than Mexican American culture elsewhere. Our original film scholar, Stephanie Hernandez, again led the way in this, for in order to present in San Diego, she changed her study to include a comparison with Mexican American murals in Southern California. There, the Chicano or even now “Chicane” initiative is much more pronounced, and enduring.

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<sup>7</sup> San Antonio Public Library, Archival Files, “Murals.” Dr. Ricardo Roma, “Chicano Murals of San Antonio.” <<https://drricardoroma.com/https-laprensatexas-com-early-chicano-murals-of-san-antonio/>> [Accessed 2 June 2025]. We were able to take a tour of the noted Chicano Park when attending the National Collegiate Honors Council in San Diego. It was startling, the differences in content from the San Antonio milieu, where one will even have the best Mexican American artist, Jesse Treviño, memorializing the U.S. military, to a zone in San Diego, with a self-proclaimed sense that it *was* in Aztlán, and not necessarily part of the United States.