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## First Chicano film is added to the National Film Registry

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by [Jonathan Muñoz](#) - Jan 5, 2015



“Please Don’t burry Me Alive” has been cataloged in the National Film Registry. (UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center)

Along with classics such as “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” and “Saving Private Ryan,” a Chicano film has found its way the National Film Registry, making it the first one in U.S. history.

Through the National Film Preservation Act, the Librarian of Congress names twenty-five films deemed “culturally, historically or aesthetically” significant to the [National Film Registry](#) every year. The goal preserve them so that future generations will be able to see these as well. It’s what makes “Please Don’t Burry Me Alive!” so special, now that’s it forms a part of the registry.

**SEE ALSO:** [Ruben Salazar questioned his own Chicano identity](#)

“The National Film Registry showcases the extraordinary diversity of America’s film heritage and the disparate strands making it so vibrant,” [said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington](#). “By preserving these films, we protect a crucial element of American creativity, culture and history.”

“[Please, Don’t Bury Me Alive!](#),” directed by self-taught filmmaker Efrain Gutierrez, is set in an early 1970s San Antonio barrio and is seen by historians as the first Chicano feature film.

The film tells a story in the days near the end of the Vietnam War — a young Chicano man questioning his and his people’s place in society, as he sees thousands of casualties among his Latino brethren from the war.

Cultural historians have compared Gutierrez to the pioneering African-American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux, who became popular in 1920s.

Professor [Chon Noriega](#), director of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, and Gutierrez sat down after news came out about the honor bestowed on the film and were interviewed on “[Take Two](#),” a show on [Southern California Public Radio](#).

They talked about the film, how it was recovered and mentioned that the film was almost lost.

You can [hear the full segment here](#).

This year’s list brings the total number of titles in the [National Film Registry](#) to 650, a very small fraction of the 1.3 million films in the Library of Congress archives.