

UCLA Newsroom

FACULTY BULLETIN BOARD

Chon Noriega in Smithsonian's 'What it means to be American'

UCLA Newsroom | May 27, 2015

Chon Noriega, director of UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center and a professor in the film, television, and digital media department, is a participant in [What It Means to Be American](#), a national conversation hosted by the Smithsonian and Zócalo Public Square.

Noriega penned an essay for the online series, ["Movies' Most Memorable Mexican-American Moments: From Stand and Deliver to Giant, These Are Hollywood's Strongest Cinematic Depictions of America's Third Largest Ethnic Group."](#)



In "The Cisco Kid and maids are only part of the story," Noriega described his evolution from a teenager who thought that Alan Arkin was Chicano after the actor played Mexican-American cop Bean in the movie "Freebie and the Bean" (1974) to his growing appreciation of Latino actors who played Mexican-American roles, from Jimmy Smits as the Cisco Kid to Lupe Ontiveros.

"The late Lupe Ontiveros was without a doubt the patron saint of Chicano cinema of this era," Noriega wrote. "Though she played a maid more than 150 times in her 36-year career, she also appeared in just about every Chicano-focused feature and television series. But — true to my love of action films — I'll always remember her as the drug lord in 'Blood In, Blood Out' (1993) and her final, magnificent shootout scene. Lupe lived large on the silver screen, and, as a consequence, so did we."

[Read Noriega's essay here.](#)

Tags: [faculty news](#) [film and television](#)

Media Contact

Office of Media Relations

310-825-2585

media@support.ucla.edu