

“Absolutely masterful!”
 “¡Absolutamente magisral!”



PROJECT
 SUMMARY

“A powerful film.”
 “Una película poderosa.”



SURVIVAL ISN'T TRENDY. IT'S THE ONLY WAY FORWARD.

DOLORES HUERTA · GUILLERMINA RODRIGUEZ · CHEF ROY CHOI · CHEF RYAN HARKINS · BILL ESPARZA · LUIS VALDEZ



Backstreet to the AMERICAN DREAM



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 18 Awards
- 90 Minutes
- Documentary Feature
- Dolores Huerta – Exec. Producer
- Jarritos – Promotional Partner
- IDA (Intl. Doc Assoc.) – Fiscal Sponsor
- Grant - Eastside Arts Initiative

FILM FESTIVALS

- 12 in the United States
- 1 in Paris, FR
- 1 GuadaLajara, MX (L.A.)

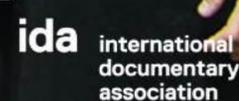
EDUCATIONAL

SCREENINGS

- 13 Universities
- 5 Cultural Centers

SOCIAL IMPACT CAMPAIGN

- Cinema. Cultura. Comunidad.
- Gardena Cinema, Sept. 27, 2025



FILM FESTIVALS 🏆



SYNOPSIS

Survival isn't trendy. It's the only way forward.

LOGLINE

A raw and intimate portrait of race, labor, and class in modern-day America, *Backstreet to the American Dream* humanizes Latino immigrants and immerses viewers in the world of blue-collar entrepreneurs selling street food.

PLOT SUMMARY

Backstreet to the American Dream—championed by Jarritos and Executive Producer Dolores Huerta, a Presidential Medal of Freedom honoree—is an award-winning documentary about race, work, and class in modern-day America. Set in Los Angeles at the peak of the \$2 billion global food truck boom, this 90-minute journey moves beyond culinary fads to cut deep into the gritty layers of L.A.'s less-glamorous neighborhoods. What emerges is a sobering reality check: a portrait of bootstrapping entrepreneurs with limited options, for whom survival is anything but trendy.

Lauded for its rich, character-driven narrative, the vivid contrast between blue-collar Americans and bold, resilient immigrants unfolds through two wildly different stories: On one side, Cleveland natives Matt Chernus and Chef Ryan Harkins win the first season of *The Great Food Truck Race* on the **Food Network** in 2010 with their iconic, heavy-metal-themed burger truck, **Grill 'Em All**, and skyrocket to reality TV stardom and social media royalty. In stark contrast, Doña Guillermina Villa Rodríguez (Doña Guille), a grandmother with salt-and-pepper hair, crossed the U.S.–Mexico border in 1977 to support her infant son back home. Since 1982, she has parked **El Pescadito**, her mariscos lonchera (seafood truck), on the same corner in a Spanish-speaking enclave of South L.A., building her business without algorithms, just word of mouth and community trust. Doña Guille is like family now to many of her customers, as she has been feeding the same immigrant families for generations.

Echoing the spirit of Civil Rights-era documentaries on African-Americans, this perspective, told from the trenches, reimagines the American Dream through a Latino lens. It exposes today's parallel fight for labor dignity, human rights, and freedom from discriminatory policing. The historic centerpiece of this powerful project is a stunning four-minute animation tracing the evolution of street food from Ancient Mexico to South L.A. Scored with handmade instruments and narrated in English, Spanish, and the Indigenous Náhuatl language, this groundbreaking sequence has won **two Best Animated Short awards**.

Amid deepening division and intensifying anti-immigrant sentiment across the United States, this bilingual story zeroes in on the singular act that unites us all: breaking bread across class and culture. Centered on food trucks, where people from all walks of life share meals, this vérité-style film is a meditation on who gets a seat at the table, and who's left cleaning up after the feast. The cinematic depiction captures the growing divide between wage earners and the wealthy, survival and spectacle, hardship and hustle. Through food, the film ignites empathy and sparks dialogue among audiences who might not otherwise contemplate the human cost of inequality.

Timely and unflinching, this cross-cultural odyssey delivers an urgent call to action: recognize the humanity of those who keep America running, and the fragility of democracy in the struggle for labor rights, dignity, and equal opportunity. A contemporary exposé, *Backstreet to the American Dream* has screened at 14 film festivals, including **Dances With Films, Newport Beach, Sonoma, San Antonio, Guadalupe Jara, Workers Unite–NYC**, and **Ethnografilm Paris**; as well as 18 universities and cultural centers across the U.S.; and has earned 18 awards/commendations.

2025 Certificate of Special Recognition: United States Congresswoman Maxine Waters (43rd District, CA)

- "For creating **Cinema. Cultura. Comunidad.**, a film and cultural festival in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month...and whose work humanizes the perception of immigrants..."

2025 Certificate of Recognition: City of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass

- "...I extend appreciation for her dedication to telling the stories of the workers and families that demonstrate the strength, resilience, and entrepreneurship that continue to shape the City of Angels."

2024 Special Commendation: L.A. County Supervisor (Dist 1)/Former U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis

- "We recognize the film's accomplishment of delving into how street food fosters inclusion, while exploring the deep connection between food, culture, and community."

2024 Special Commendation: L.A. County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath (Dist. 3)

- "We applaud Patricia for the illustrious response she has received for this film..."

2024 Special Commendation: L.A. City Councilmember Mónica Rodríguez (Dist. 7)

- "Thank you for documenting the hard work and sacrifices of immigrants as they chase the American Dream."

Garifuna International Indigenous Film Festival

Intangible Heritage Documentary

2022

Highland Park Independent Film Festival

Best Feature Documentary

2022

Highland Park Independent Film Festival

Humanitarian Award

2022

Culver City Film Festival

Best Director Documentary Feature

2022

San Antonio Film Festival

Best Food Film

2022

San Antonio Film Festival

Audience Award Best Documentary Feature

2022

Ruben Salazar National Journalism Award

Digital Media (2nd Place)

2021

Riverside International Film Festival

Jury Award Best Animation Short

2021

Independent Shorts Awards

Jury Award Best Animated Short

2021

United Workers Film Festival

Special Jury Prize

2021

2012 United States Congress: **The Congressional Award** – U.S. Congresswoman Loretta Sánchez, CA Dist. 46

2012 United States Congress: **The Congressional Award** – U.S. Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, CA Dist. 38

2012 La Asociación Latina de Asistencia & Partners – **Leaders Blazing Trails Award**

- "Dedication to the Betterment of our Communities"

" I would love to be able to screen this film to my students to empower them to make their project's come to life when released."
-Joanna Mineo, Advisor MASSStep Culinary Program •
Hampden County Sheriff's Office, Massachusetts



Backstreet to the AMERICAN DREAM

LOGLINE

A raw and intimate portrait of race, labor, and class in modern-day America, *Backstreet to the American Dream* humanizes Latino immigrants and immerses viewers in the world of blue-collar entrepreneurs selling street food.

SOCIAL IMPACT CAMPAIGN

Cinema. Cultura. Comunidad., presented on Sept. 27, 2025 at the historic Gardena Cinema, served as the public launch of the film's impact campaign. Funded by a grant from L.A. County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell (Dist 2) and honored with **Certificates of Special Recognition from U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters** and **L.A. Mayor Karen Bass**, the daylong festival showcased films directed by fierce Latinas, local artisans, and community storytellers. A spotlight conversation with **NASA astronaut José Hernández** (*A Million Miles Away*) examined harmful media portrayals of Latinos and their real-world consequences. *Backstreet to the American Dream* closed the event. Highlights available on [Instagram](#).

EDUCATIONAL SCREENINGS

- 03.22.2025 - [CSULA Mesoamerican Symposium](#)
- 08.03.2024 - [Chicano Resource Center](#)
- 12.08.2023 - [Smithsonian Initiative/JANM](#)
- 10.10.2023 - [UCLA Alumni/Labor Center](#)
- 04.13.2023 - [Nat. Hispanic Cultural Center](#)
- 11.10.2022 - [USC ASE Dept.](#)
- 10.11.2022 - [SF State University](#)
- 09.28.2022 - [Cal Poly Pomona](#)
- 09.27.2022 - [San Jose City College](#)
- 09.24.2022 - [Texas A&M SA \(TAMUSA\)](#)
- 09.21.2022 - [Trinity University \(Campus-wide\)](#)
- 09.21.2022 - [Trinity University \(Class\)](#)
- 09.20.2022 - [UIW - HEB School of Business](#)
- 09.19.2022 - [Brick at Blue Star](#)
- 10.13.2021 - [NuyoRican Poets Cafe](#)
- 10.12.2021 - [Fordham University](#)
- 10.12.2021 - [Columbia Grad School of Journalism](#)
- 09.16.2021 - [UArizona Journalism School](#)

"*Backstreet to the American Dream* is the intersection between immigration, workers' rights, social justice, and the informal economy. It's the kind of film I love to show my students at the beginning of the quarter, so they can understand the issues we will cover."

-Professor Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, Project Director at UCLA Labor Center

• University of California, Los Angeles

MEDIA | PRESS

- 10.28.2025 - [Mex-American/Latino Lens Live](#)
- 12.20.2023 - [Democracy Center TV](#)
- 10.06.2022 - [NBC4/CA Live](#)
- 09.23.2022 - [Kens5 \(NBC San Antonio\)](#)
- 09.22.2022 - [The Mesquite News](#)
- 08.02.2022 - [Kens5 \(NBC San Antonio\)](#)
- 07.29.2022 - [La Prensa Texas](#)
- 07.31.2022 - [San Antonio Reporter](#)
- 08.05.2022 - [Fronteras \(Texas Public Radio\)](#)
- 03.24.2022 - [SonomaTV](#)
- 03.19.2022 - [Fandor Festival Podcast](#)
- 12.04.2021 - [CCNMA: Ruben Salazar Nat. Journalism Award](#)
- 11.02.2021 - [Latina.com](#)
- 10.17.2021 - [Newport Beach Independent Newspaper](#)
- 10.10.2021 - [KTTV: In-Depth \(Hal Eisner\)](#)
- 10.07.2021 - [WPIX Morning Show](#)
- 08.27.2021 - [Mexican Consulate in LA](#)
- 08.23.2021 - [LA Daily News](#)
- 08.18.2021 - [En Casa con La Plaza](#)

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Screenings & Press:

✉ Info@BackstreetFilm.com | 📞 213.632.8078

Fuel the Story. Feed the Change.

Donations Are Tax-Free:

✉ documentary.org/project/backstreet-american-dream



WEBSITES

→ BackstreetFilm.com

→ PatriciaNazario.com

In Appreciation

KAREN BASS

MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES

MAXINE WATERS
CONGRESSWOMAN FOR CALIFORNIA'S 43RD



HOLLY J. MITCHELL

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR ♦ 2ND DISTRICT

DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION
FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



Lorena Sanchez



CONGRESSWOMAN
Linda
SÁNCHEZ
SERVING CALIFORNIA'S 38TH DISTRICT



LA Civil Rights

Janm

JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM



Smithsonian



★ SUPERVISOR ★
HILDA SOLIS

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR

LINDSEY

Horvath

THIRD DISTRICT

National Hispanic Cultural Center



MARISCOS JALISCO

MONICA RODRIGUEZ

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 7

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