

# Films that portray migrants and migration-related themes

Submitted by Mark McGregor. Many are found on the website of Murthy Law Firm, <http://www.murthy.com/films.html>, and on that of the California Council for the Humanities [http://www.calhum.org/programs/grapes\\_filmography.htm#immigrant](http://www.calhum.org/programs/grapes_filmography.htm#immigrant)

*Which Way Home (2009)* – A 90 minute documentary follows unaccompanied immigrant children who daringly ride Mexican freight trains to get to the United States. Director Rebecca Cammisa brings the lives of children out of the shadows as they live through dangerous journeys, mean police and treacherous circumstances. The courage and resilience of the youth is remarkable in the face of so many harrowing moments and difficulties

*Emilio (2009)* - When the younger sister of Emilio is kidnapped, this 19 year-old leaves his Mexican village to bring her back from Los Angeles. As Emilio frantically searches the neighborhoods and streets of L.A., he encounters gangs, drug dealers, day laborers and actors. Director Kim Jorgenson tells both a dramatic tale of a brother's love for his sister and a coming of age story.

*Frozen River (2008)* - In a powerful story set on the U.S. Canadian border, Courtney Hunt's directorial debut won awards at many film festivals, including the Sundance's Grand Jury Prize. Hunt's script and Melissa Leo's leading role also garnered Academy Awarded nominations. On a Mohawk reservation in upstate New York single moms, played by Leo and Misty Upham, smuggle immigrants from Canada across the frozen St. Lawrence River. The economic plight that drives these two women underscores the grim economic signs of the times for immigrants and citizen.

*The Visitor (2008)* Tom McCarthy directed *The Station Agent* and now has directed another poignant film. This story is of a college professor who lives in Connecticut and who also has a New York City apartment that he has not been to since his wife's death. He goes and finds an immigrant couple living in his apartment. Instead of turning them in or turning them out, he begins a new life. Dramatic turns bring the US immigration system into their lives.

*La Misma Luna – Under the Same Moon (2008)* An immigrant family story written by Ligiah Villalobos and directed by Patricia Riggen. Carlos is 9 and lives in Mexico with his grandmother; his mother lives in Los Angeles, cleaning homes. Carlos makes his way across the border to reunite with his mother. A tender tearjerker which is full of many wonderful performances, including Eugenio Derbez (one of Mexico's best-known actors), Los Tigres del Norte and America Ferrera.

*Sangre de mi Sangre (2008)* Entitled *Padro Nuestro* when it won great acclaim at Sundance in 2007, this film is a story of an unaccompanied immigrant youth. Written and directed by **Christopher Zalla**, the story is about Juan and Pedro's intertwined journeys. They meet on a truck carrying immigrants from Mexico to New York. Pedro, in search of a father he has never known, shows Juan a letter of introduction that his deceased mother had written. Once in New York, Pedro wakes to discover that Juan has vanished with his It's about identity, and the search for family love, especially of a boy's desire to know and be loved by his father.

*The Price of Sugar (2007)* The 90 minute documentary narrated by Paul Newman tells the story of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic and a Catholic priest who defends their human rights. On an island with tourist beaches Director Bill Haney shows how horribly Haitians are treated and the courageous Fr. Christopher Hartley, a Spanish priest.

*Mississippi Chicken* (2007) Director John Fiege Questions of race and workers' rights form the crux of this documentary about Latin American immigrants in rural Mississippi. There are jobs at poultry plants, but little else. Running time: 82 minutes.

*Posada* (2007), Directed by Mark McGregor. This documentary tells the story of three unaccompanied immigrant minors who travel to the U.S. and of a fourth youth, deported to Mexico after growing up in the U.S. The three boys are arrested by U.S. authorities and go through legal proceedings to stay in the U.S. *Posada* relates their journey to the Mexican Christmas procession called Las Posadas. In 2005 over 110,000 unaccompanied immigrants children were picked up by the U.S. Border, and nearly 8,000 held in the U.S. Running time is 57 minutes.

*Babel* (2006) Alejandro González Iñárritu, director. Nominated for Best Picture and 6 other categories by the Academy Awards, including Adriana Barraza and Rinko Kikuchi, both for Best Supporting Actress. *Babel* has four storylines about people, united in their own grief and hope, who literally and figuratively cross borders on different continents. The stellar cast includes Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett and Gael Garcia Bernal - all who turn in great performances. Running time is 143 minutes.

*Choking Man* (2006) Director, Steve Barron. In the Queens neighborhood not far from the flight paths of JFK, this feature film is about a shy dish washer from Ecuador. The blend of magical realism and drama unfolds at the Olympic Diner.

*Ghosts* (2006) Director, Nick Broomfield. Based on a true story, it portrays the story of Ai Qin, a young Chinese girl from Fujian, borrows \$25,000 to pay the Snakehead gang to smuggle her into the UK so she can support her son and family back in China. Once in the UK, she becomes another one of three million migrant workers that are the bedrock of its food supply chain, construction and hospitality industries. Running time: 96 minutes

*The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon* (2006) Director, Juan Carlos Frey spent a year documenting Mexican migrants living in clandestine shacks in the midst of one of the most expensive real estate in America. Running time: 73 minutes

*Invisible Children* (2006) Directors Laren Poole and Jason Russell have filmed the tales of children soldiers in Uganda in this documentary short.

*El Inmigrante* (2005) Directors David and John Eckenrode & John Sheedy's documentary explores the death of Eusebio Haro, a Mexican immigrant who was shot and killed in rural Texas in 2000. Running time: 90 minutes.

*Dying to Live: A Migrant's Journey* (2005) Dan Groody, a Holy Cross priest and Notre Dame professor directs and has written a powerful documentary that puts a human face on Mexican migrants and why they leave their homelands for. A host of experts and theologians comment on globalization and migration. The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops adopted it as an educational resource. Running time: 33minutes.

*If Turtles Can Fly* (2005) Director Bahman Ghobadi. On the Turkish-Iraqi border a 13 year-old refugee awaits the fall of Saddam Hussein. Running time: 98 minutes

*Maid in Lebanon* (2005) Director Carole Mansour. This documentary is about migrant domestic workers, mainly from Sri Lanka, who leave their home countries to make enough money to support their families. What they find upon arrival in Lebanon is not always what they expected. Funded by Caritas, the Netherlands Embassy, and the International Labor Organization, with the support of the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it was shot in Sri Lanka and Lebanon. Running time: 26 minutes.

*Innocent* (2005) Directed by Simon Chung. Eric, a 17 year old, immigrates with his parents from Hong Kong to Canada, only he does not know the family vacation is really a move to North America. The story is a coming-of-age film as Eric discovers his own gay sexual orientation and deals with the rejections associated with his sexual and immigrant identities. Running time: 80 minutes.

*Mojados: Through the Night* (2004) Documentarian Tommy Davis meets and follows four Mexicans who leave their homeland in search of work in the US. A spark of the personal journeys of the migrants is captured in this 70 minute film.

*The Beautiful Country* (2004) Directed by Hans Petter Moland this feature tells the story of Binh, born in Vietnam of a Vietnamese mother and American father. Not accepted in his homeland, Binh flees with his brother after an unfortunate accident. The film follows their escape, time in a Malaysian refugee detention center and new life in America. Nick Nolte and Tim Roth have small roles. Running time: 125 minutes.

*Endless Exodus* (2004) Gerry Straub has created a documentary film that is a meditation on migration. It focuses on migrants from Mexico and Central America who cross the border and enter California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas without any documentation. The film hopes to shed light on the life of the poor in order to help you better understand why they are forced to leave their homes and countries for a back-breaking, low-paying job in a foreign land whose culture is dramatically different from theirs. Running time: 153 minutes.

*Dragon* (1998) Rob Cohen, director. Jason Scott Lee portrays martial arts and film legend Bruce Lee in this bio pic. It portrays Lee's journey from martial arts training to opening a kung-fu school in America to his discovery by a Hollywood producer, played by Robert Wagner. Running time: 120 minutes.

*Big Night* (1996) Directed by Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott. A delightful story of two Italian brothers who have emigrated to America and try to make a go of their restaurant "Paradiso." Primo is the perfectionistic chef whose cuisine is art; Secondo is the smooth host who is the restaurant's businessman. To keep from being foreclosed on by the bank, Secondo turns to Pascal, owner of a disgustingly successful Italian place up the street. Pascal says that he will arrange for jazz singer Louie Prima and band to come for one big night.

*The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988) directed by Robert Redford. Redford uses a bit of magical realism in his comedic tale of a conflict over water uses by migrants, farmers and developers. A Chicano handyman sets off a clash of cultures. Running time: 118 minutes.

WEBSITE - <http://www.murthy.com/films.html> From the immigration law firm, Murthy Law Firm, is a page dedicated to films that portray immigrants.

*"We at MurthyDotCom are compiling a list of movies in which immigrants or immigration play an important role, just as we believe they play an important part in American life and culture. Whether art reflects life or life reflects art, these films run the gamut between hilarity, drama, and poignancy. If nothing else, you are sure to be entertained!"*

**A Slim Peace** (2007) U.K. director Yael Luttwak follows 14 women in the West Bank - Israelis, Palestinians, Bedouin Arabs, and American settlers - who have the shared goal of losing weight. This universal struggle is no less important and no less personal in a land of perpetual conflict. Their common goal shows them that they have far more in common than they would have believed. Premiered at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival.

**Miss Universe 1929** (2007) Director Peter Forgacs (*El Parro Negro*, 2005) returns to Tribeca with this true story of Marci Tenczer, amateur filmmaker, who, smitten with his cousin, follows her from her modest Austrian roots to her crowning as the first Miss Universe at a pageant in Texas. Her rise coincides with that of Adolf Hitler, who turns the universe upside-down.

**Forging a Nation** (2007) Director David Blaustein retraced the steps of his Jewish ancestors accompanied by his mother and a host of extended family. Having fled Europe in the 1920s, hoping for a bright future in Argentina, the journey of the

film becomes an exploration of the many people and the many factors that joined to build Argentina. Presented for the first time in North America at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival.

**Beyond Belief** (2007) This documentary premiered at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival is the story of two amazing women who lost their husbands in 9/11. Greif is turned to action as they are compelled to travel to Kabul to help women the who are widowed there.

**32nd Street** (2007) Premiered at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival, this film is directed by Michael Kang; written by Michael Kang and Edmund Lee. It is the story of an ambitious young attorney who pushes his way onto a homicide case and infiltrates New York's Korean syndicate.

**Never Forever** (2007) This film from the Sundance film festival is about a biracial American couple. When the woman is unable to conceive, she boldly begins a relationship with an illegal immigrant from Korea. This film has been praised for its art direction and costume design. Writer / director **Gina Kim** has also received accolades for her abilities and **Vera Farmiga** for her role as the ethereal beauty, Sophie.

**The Namesake** (2006) Finally released! The much-anticipated film adaptation of Jhumpa Lahiri's acclaimed novel by the same name. Directed by Mira Nair (**Monsoon Wedding** 2000), **Kal Penn** (**Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle** 2004) stars as Gogol in this tale of a first generation son of traditional, Indian immigrant parents. As he tries to make a place for himself, not always able to straddle two worlds gracefully, he is surprised by what he learns about his family and himself.

**Fast Food Nation** (2006) Writer / director **Richard Linklater** (**A Scanner Darkly** 2006) brings this dramatization of the non-fiction book by Eric Schlosser to the big screen. A raw look at the impact the fast-food industry has on American life and culture - which cannot be portrayed without including undocumented workers. **Greg Kinnear** (**As Good as it Gets** 1997), **Catalina Sandino Moreno** (**Maria Full of Grace** 2004), and **Paul Dano** (**Little Miss Sunshine** 2006) star.

**Sweet Land** (2006) Based on Will Weaver's short story, "A Grave Made of Wheat," **Sweet Land** is a flashback to 1920s Minnesota, when Lars Torvik's grandparents met on their wedding day that wasn't. It is a story of love and trial and strength of will and prejudice. It is the story of how the American heartland was settled by immigrants. Olaf and Inge represent the grandparents and great-grandparents of many Americans. Written and directed by **Ali Salim**, himself the son of first-generation immigrants.

**In Between Days** (2006) Competitor in the independent drama category at Sundance 2006, this is a coming-of-age film about a Korean American teenager, though it is more than that and not easily categorized, exploring many facets of humanity, relationships, and communication. Starring **Jiseon Kim** as Aimie, and directed by **So Yong Kim**, the dynamic between director and actress expresses much more than dialog alone would accomplish.

**God Grew Tired of Us** (2006) Won the jury prize and audience award for U.S. documentaries at Sundance 2006. The film follows three Sudanese boys, refugees from Sudan's bloody civil war, as they try to adjust to life in the U.S. Coming from unspeakable conditions, young witnesses of unspeakable horrors, their honesty and goodness is unquestionable. And so the question raised is, "What conditions create a civilized society?" Directed by **Christopher Quinn**.

**The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada** (2005) **Tommy Lee Jones** (**Men in Black** 1997) stars in and directs this unusual movie about promises, both kept and broken, and redemption. The truest expression of love in the film is between Texas cowboy, Pete (**Jones**), and his best friend, Melquiades (**Julio Cesar Cedillo**), who has illegally crossed the border for work.

Barry Pepper gives a startling performance as the heartless CBP officer.

**Game 6** (2005) This is a quietly brilliant little film about a Broadway playwright, Nicky Rogan (**Michael Keaton**), whose opening night coincides during Game 6 of the 1986 World Series between the New York Mets and the Boston Red Sox. **Robert Downey, Jr.** is the loathsome critic who is about to plunge Nicky's career into the toilet. The immigrant connection comes in with each taxi ride, and is a wonderful element of the film. This is a story about connections. Connecting over the theatre. Connection over taxis. And, largely, connecting over baseball.

**Romántico** (2005) This is a tale of two Mariachi musicians who come to San Francisco, trying to make a better life for themselves and scrape out a living. Eventually, Carmelo Sanchez has to return to Mexico to care for his ailing mother. Directed by **Mark Becker**.

**La Tragedia de Macario** (2005) Writer, director, editor **Pablo Véliz** brought this immigrant story to Sundance 2006 for its world premiere. In the title role, **Rogelio Ramos** is drawn to the U.S. to find a better life for his wife in this Spanish language film. Joined by his best friend, the two set out on the dangerous journey undertaken by so many each year. Véliz's insight is the desperation that drives them and the spirituality that sustains them as they risk their lives.

**Quinceañera** (2005) A jury prize and audience award winner in the U.S. drama competition at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. **Wash Westmoreland** and **Richard Glatzer** wrote and directed this look into the life of an unconventional family and their Los Angeles neighborhood, threatened by urban development, generally passed with windows up and doors locked.

**DeNADIE** (2005) Presented in the World Documentary category at Sundance 2006, this film comes from Mexico and follows the path traced by many leaving South and Central America bound for freedoms and opportunities too basic to be rightfully exclusive. A filmmaking neophyte, **Tin Dirdamal** approaches the medium with the sensitivity and skill of a veteran, drawing us into the oft-told story of immigrant hardships, presenting it in a way that makes it more real and personal than we possibly could have understood before.

**Crossing Arizona** (2005) A documentary presented at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, this film explores escalating tensions over illegal immigration at their epicenter - the Arizona / Sonora border. Human rights, national security, class, and culture are explored through the personal experiences of the locals on both sides of the border in this balanced look at the issues. Directed by **Joseph Mathew**.

**Everything is Illuminated** (2005) **Liev Schreiber** writes and directs this quirky film adaptation of the novel by **Jonathan Safran Foer**, in which a young Ukrainian man, Alex (**Eugene Hutz**) and his grandfather (**Boris Leskin**) forge an unlikely alliance with Jonathan Safran Foer (Yes, our hero has the same name as the novel's author.). Jonathan (**Elijah Wood**) is a young American Jew on a pilgrimage to the small village from which his grandfather escaped, in search of the woman whom the family believes saved their patriarch from the Nazis. Jonathan is not the only one who finds something on this journey, however.

**The Keeper : The Legend of Omar Khayyam** (2005) Starring **Vanessa Redgrave** (**Julia** 1978), a young boy, Kamran, learns that the 11th century Persian poet was his ancestor. It becomes his responsibility to keep the oral history of his family alive. This is the first film of Iranian-American director **Kayvan Mashayekh**. a newcomer to the filmmaking industry, having left his career as a lawyer in Houston. Mashayekh was researching locations abroad on September 11, 2001, making the financing and creation of this film all the more difficult.

[Night of Henna](#) (2005) A film by **Hassin Zee** that takes place in San Francisco, this independent production is about Hava (**Pooja Kumar**), who has returned to the United States after a traditional upbringing in Pakistan. At the very time when her eyes are opened to the possibilities of life, those possibilities are threatened by her impending, arranged marriage. Zee is a true Renaissance man, preferring to write, direct, and produce films rather than make a career that uses his doctoral degree in medicine.

[Sueño](#) (2005) This was the directorial debut of **Renee Chabria**, who also wrote the screenplay. A young man (**John Leguizamo**) with musical aspirations leaves Mexico to realize his dreams of success in America. There he meets Mirabella (**Elizabeth Peña**) and Nina (**Ana Claudia Talancón**), and finds himself in a love triangle.

[Saving Face](#) (2004) Written and directed by **Alice Wu**, this is the story of a lesbian, Chinese-American doctor in Manhattan and her pregnant, unmarried mother. It is a film that faces taboos and the clash between first and 2nd generation immigrants with a loving look at this mother-daughter relationship. (**Michelle Krusiec, Joan Chen, and Lynn Chen**)

[Spanglish](#) (2004) Mexican mother, Flor (**Paz Vega**), enters the U.S. with her young daughter seeking a better life. When she accepts a position as a domestic with an American family it becomes very difficult to maintain her privacy and distance. A story about assimilation, this film provides lessons on tolerance for the misguided but good intentions of immigrants as well as the Americans who employ and/or befriend them. **Adam Sandler, Tea Leoni, and Cloris Leachman** (*The Last Picture Show* 1971).

[Bride and Prejudice](#) (2004) A Bollywood twist on Jane Austin's classic novel *Pride and Prejudice*, the conflict between Darcy (**Martin Henderson**) and Lalitha (**Aishwarya Rai**) is cross-cultural as she makes a choice between the man she wants and the man her mother wants for her.

[Maria Full of Grace \(Maria Ilena eres de Gracia\)](#) (2004) This film is billed as not being based on a true story, yet it is something that happens everyday. Maria Alvarez (**Catalina Sandino Moreno**) lives a modest life in a rural area outside Bogotá, Colombia. At 17, her work and her life seem futureless, but Maria's nature is strong and assertive. She meets Franklin (**Jhon Alex Toro**) at a party. He is stylish and charismatic and tempts Maria with talk of work involving adventure and travel to America. So Maria becomes a mule in the dangerous drug underworld. **Joshua Marston** (*Bus to Queens* 1999) directed this film that won awards at Sundance and Berlin.

[The Terminal](#) (2004) This **Steven Spielberg** (*Saving Private Ryan* 1998, *Schindler's List* 1994) film is about an eastern European man, played by **Tom Hanks** (*Forrest Gump* 1995, *Philadelphia* 1994) on his way to New York when his homeland is overthrown in a coup. He arrives at Kennedy Airport as a man without a country, without a valid passport. **Kumar Pallana** (*The Royal Tenenbaums* 2001) plays Gupta. From Madras, Gupta becomes an unlikely hero in the story.

[A Day Without a Mexican](#) (2004) One third of the population of California are Latinos, Hispanics, Mexicans. How would it change life for the state's other residents if this portion of the populous was suddenly not there? Director **Sergio Arau** calls his film a "mockumentary." **Yareli Arizmendi**, married to Arau, co-wrote and stars in the film. She says it is their hope that lawmakers and moviegoers will recognize the valuable contributions made everyday by Latinos.

[The Gatekeeper](#) (2004) MexicanAmerican **John Carlos Frey** wrote, directed, and starred in this film about a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol agent who turns vigilante and goes undercover to pursue those he sees as "undesirables" crossing the U.S. border from Mexico. Things go very wrong when he is caught in the midst of a Central American drug ring, surrounded

by those he has hated. But Frey's character begins to see the people as individuals with families and the desire for a sense of 'home.' The most valuable lesson is, perhaps, that humanity knows no borders.

[\*Al Otro Lado\*](#) (2004) A gripping film from Mexico about three children, two boys from Cuba and Mexico and a girl from Morocco, and the emotional bond that they have for with their parents. In all three stories, each child moves through the difficulty of an absent parent. This 90 minute film is in Spanish

[\*Lost Boys of Sudan\*](#) (2003) This award-winning documentary by Megan Mylan and John Shenk follows two of the many children who were among an estimated twenty thousand forced from their homes and families by the 1987 civil war in southern Sudan. Most were only six or seven years old when their journey began. Of those who survived to reach the refugee camp in Kenya, almost 4,000 were resettled in the U.S. to further their educations. This is the story of two of those boys.

[\*In America\*](#) (2003) Nominated for 3 Academy Awards, this is the story of a modern-day Irish family who crosses the Canadian border, headed for New York in a struggle to shake off their nightmares in search of their American dreams. While it may not be wealth and success that they find, there is a neighbor who gives them friendship and helps them to finally attain peace. Writer / director **Jim Sheridan** (*In the Name of the Father* 1993, and *My Left Foot* 1989) needed to look no further than his own childhood for inspiration for this film.

[\*Dirty Pretty Things\*](#) (2003) Oscar-nominated for its screenplay by **Steven Knight**, this is a thriller is about a gruesome underworld in London preying on the fear and desperation of immigrants. Directed by **Steven Frears** (*My Beautiful Laundrette* 1985), the story centers around a Nigerian immigrant, **Okwe (Chiwetel Ejiofor)**, who drives a cab by day and works in a hotel by night and the young Turkish woman (**Audrey Tautou**) he befriends. Okwe discovers the ghoulish black market, putting their lives in danger.

[\*House of Sand and Fog\*](#) (2003) Nominated for three Academy Awards, this directorial debut for **Vadim Perelman** is a gripping drama in which **Sir Ben Kingsley** (*Gandhi* 1982) plays a proud Iranian colonel living a lie, when he finds an opportunity to improve things for his family by purchasing a home being sold at auction. But **Jennifer Connelly** (*A Beautiful Mind* 2001) is losing her home - the last shred of hope in her life - through a bureaucratic error, and she will not go down without a fight. It is a story of the American Dream spinning out of control. **Shohreh Aghdashloo** received a nomination for Best Support Actress as the colonel's wife.

[\*Green Card Fever\*](#) (2003) From new director **Bala Rajasekharuni**, this is the story of a young immigrant, played by **Vikram Dasu**, from India who overstays his U.S. visa. Forced to decide who he can trust, he becomes emboldened when he learns that in America, if you want something, you sue somebody for it!

[\*Flavors\*](#) (2003) Written and Directed by software professionals **Krishna D.K.** and **Raj Nidimoru**, who have a talent for dialog, *Flavors* is not a big budget film by the standards of Hollywood or Bollywood. It was noticed by *Variety*, however, and that is saying something! The two also made *Shaadi.com* in 2001, in which each makes an appearance in front of the camera.

[\*Pieces of April\*](#) (2003) While not central to the plot, the immigrant neighbors of April (**Katie Holmes**) help to save the day when her stove breaks on Thanksgiving. She tells them the story of the first Thanksgiving and the spirit of the day prevails in this off-beat independent film with **Patricia Clarkson** and **Oliver Pratt**, directed by **Peter Hedges** (*About a Boy* 2003 and *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* 1992).

[Lana's Rain](#) (2003) Directed by Michael Ojeda, Ukrainian born actress **Oksana Orlenko** makes her American film debut in the title role which won her a Best Actress award in the Milan International Film Festival. Clinging to the only family she has left, Lana accompanies her brother, Darko (**Nickolai Stoilov**) to the U.S., leaving Croatia following the Balkan Wars. Darko has survived through criminal activity in Eastern Europe and this is all he knows. But Lana wants simple things and a new life in America.

[The Guru](#) (2002) Ramu (**Jimi Mistry**) is a dance instructor in the U.K. who decides he is going to America to pursue the American dream. A fan of American movies since childhood, Ramu's goal is to become a film star. Through his own naiveté and a series of coincidences, he fills in for an old guru at a party attended by the rich and famous and becomes famous as a sex guru. Directed by **Daisy von Scherler Mayer** with **Marisa Tomei** (*My Cousin Vinny* 1992) and **Heather Graham** (*Boogie Nights* 1997).

[Spellbound](#) (2002) This documentary was an unexpected success. It is about the 1999 National Spelling Bee championship competition in Washington D.C. Dry subject? Not in the masterful hands of director **Jeffrey Blitz**. The film celebrates the diversity of America through the children competing and their families who support them. Of the eight finalists, three are from immigrant families. The competitors are old enough to have rich and individual personalities, yet still young enough that they are not afraid to show themselves as who they really are.

[Gangs of New York](#) (2002) **Martin Scorsese's** (*The Last Temptation of Christ* 1988, *Goodfellas* 1990) epic film starring **Leonardo DiCaprio** (*Titanic* 1997), **Cameron Diaz** (*There's Something About Mary* 1998), and **Daniel Day Lewis** (*My Left Foot* 1989), depicting the ruthlessness and the division in a 19th century New York between those who were here and the Irish trying to make room for themselves. It is a story of deep-seeded revenge.

[Real Women Have Curves](#) (2002) Ana (**America Ferrera**) has graduated from her east Los Angeles high school and won a full scholarship to Columbia University. Rather than support her own dreams, however, Ana's MexicanAmerican parents believe it is time for her to work and help to support the family. Spending the summer working in a sewing factory with other Chicanas, Ana learns a respect for these women and what is essential for her to make her own way in the world.

[Bend it Like Beckham](#) (2002) This delight, directed by **Gurinder Chadha** (*A Nice Arrangement* 1994), is the story of **Jesminder Bhamra** (**Parminder Nagra**), daughter of strict Indian Sikh immigrants living in the U.K. Jess is a very gifted football, or soccer, player. Unfortunately, her parents are less than thrilled by this!

[My Big Fat Greek Wedding](#) (2002) An independent film directed by **Joel Zwick**, written by **Nia Vardalos**, who also starred in the film with **John Corbett** and **Michael Constantine** (*The Hustler* 1961). Toula is the dutiful daughter, 30 years old and working in the family-owned Greek diner. She meets and falls in love with Ian Miller - not the nice Greek boy her family had in mind for her! How far are Toula and Ian willing to go to make a marriage her family can live with?

[ABCD](#) (2001) Starring the acclaimed actress (and author of numerous books on Indian cooking), **Madhur Jaffrey** (*Shakespeare Wallah* 1965), as a widow trying to reconcile the decision made decades earlier to move to the United States. It is a story experienced by the children of immigrants the world over. They know no country so well as the one in which they have grown up, but don't feel connected to it or to the country from which their parents came. They are adrift between cultures.

[The Immigrant Garden](#) (2001) The story behind this film reads like a screenplay, itself. It is a pet, independent project of

retired Hollywood film producer, **C. Tad Devlin** (*When a Man Loves a Woman* 1994), who left Hollywood for life in the small community of Chehalis, WA. This is the story of a correspondence and friendship between two gardeners - young Cecily in rural Washington and the 80-year-old Mrs. Beauchamp in England. The story is rich in character because its characters are rich, discovering themselves and understanding others.

**Monsoon Wedding** (2000) We include this **Mira Nair** (*Salaam Bombay!* 1988) film in our list of movies about immigrants because of a character not most central to the story. Family members gather from all over for the wedding of Adita (**Vasundhara Das**) and Hemant (**Parveen Dabaas**). But painful memories of a family secret surface for cousin Ria (**Shafali Shetty**) with the arrival of a revered uncle (**Rajat Kapoor**) who now lives in the U.S. Also starring **Roshan Seth** (*Mississippi Masala* 1991, *My Beautiful Launderette* 1985).

**Bread and Roses** (2000) The struggle for fair and just working conditions in the United States has existed as long as there has been one group who would take advantage of the desperation and fear of another. This film from director **Ken Loach** (*The Wind that Shakes the Barley* 2006) is the story of two sisters who work as janitors. As undocumented workers from Mexico, they endure hardship and abuses. When a young man (**Adrien Brody**) comes around attempting to unionize workers, the issue divides them - while dividing Maya and Rosa, as well.

**Tortilla Soup** (2000) It is a story that has been told and will continue to be retold with every new generation and every culture that immigrates to the U.S. **Hector Elizondo** (*Pretty Woman* 1990) shines as the Mexican- American patriarch in this successful adaptation of *Eat Drink Man Woman* 1994, which told a part of the story from the Chinese perspective. It is the tale of a father, his daughters, and the men in their lives. As with every culture, especially when transplanted to another country, food plays a very important part in cultural identity and connections. Directed by **Maria Ripoll**.

**Dofar Dream\$** (2000) This chord rings familiar with many, as director **Sekhar Kammula**, tells the tale of a group of friends, answering the big question - whether or not to go to the U.S. to make a lot of money. One in the group drops her studies to actively pursue their responses.

**Catfish in Black Bean Sauce** (1999) Directed by **Chi Moui Lo**, who also starred in the film, this is the story of Vietnamese siblings, Dwayne (**Lo**) and Mai (**Lauren Tom**), who were adopted by an African American couple (**Paul Winfield** and **Mary Alice**) in the U.S. Dwayne is engaged and has adjusted well to his American life. Mai, however, was older when she left Vietnam. She has memories of her birth mother and is driven to search for her.

**La Ciudad (The City)** (1999) This award-winning documentary by writer / filmmaker **David Riker** played to sold-out crowds in the New York art houses when it opened. It is a series of four shorts Riker began making in 1992 about Mexican workers who come to Manhattan - filled with the American dream but also afraid of the City. Filmed in black and white, the photography has been compared to socially conscious artists such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans. The film style itself has been compared to that of **Vittoria De Sica's** *The Bicycle Thief* 1948.

**East is East** (1999) George and Ella Khan (played by **Om Puri** and **Linda Bassett**) have seven children and lead a modest but happy life as owners of a fish-and-chip shop in Salford, UK. Trouble begins when George, a Pakistani-born Muslim, begins arranging marriages for his sons. The children want to be British, their British mother wants to meld the two cultures into a cohesive home for her family. It is not an unfamiliar tale. Directed by **Damien O'Donnell** (*Inside I'm Dancing - aka Rory O'Shea Was Here* 2004).

**Hyderabad Blues** (1998) Directorial debut from 28-year-old chemical engineer **Nagesh Kukunoor**, this film shows that the

confusion of ABCDs exists, not only in their fitting into American culture, but also when they return to India after growing up in the U.S. Produced largely with amateurs on a modest budget, **Hyderabad Blues** is a romantic comedy that thoroughly entertains and also presents some thought-provoking questions.

**The Journey** (1997) Acclaimed painter-turned-writer / director, **Harish Saluja** tells the story of an Indian gentleman who comes to visit his son's (**Antony Zaki**) family in Pittsburg for, what becomes, an extended stay. Played by **Roshan Seth** (**Monsoon Wedding** 2000), the elderly visitor has difficulty understanding his American daughter-in-law (**Carrie Preston**). But he tries to fit into their lives, helping out when he can or simply stepping aside when that seems the better thing to do. This is a movie about cultural clashes and coming to feel comfortable in two very different worlds.

**Lone Star** (1996) Writer / Director **John Sayles** (**The Secret of Roan Inish** 1994, **Brother from Another Planet** 1984) masterfully blends one part Western, one part murder mystery, and one part love story to create this tale of life in a small Texas border town, topped off with Mexicans crossing the river under cover of night. When the remains of the former sheriff are discovered, the current sheriff, Sam, played by **Chris Cooper** (**Adaptation** 2002), must solve the murder of his own father. What he discovers leads to a web of lies and corruption that touches everyone - including Sam's high school sweetheart, Pilar, played by **Elizabeth Pena** (**Tortilla Soup** 2000). Pena won an Independent Spirit Award for her role.

**French Kiss** (1995) Providing a different point of view, **Meg Ryan** is Kate, an American emigrant. Kate is becoming a Canadian citizen because she is marrying Charlie (**Timothy Hutton**), a Canadian. But Charlie goes to Paris for a medical convention, where he meets Juliet (**Susan Anbeh**). He breaks his engagement to Kate, who flies to Paris to win Charlie back. But on the way, she meets French boorish bad boy, Luc (**Kevin Klein**). After losing her passport when she was not supposed to leave Canada while her citizenship was pending, Kate finds herself "without country" and she and Luc strike a bargain to get what each of them wants most. **Lawrence Kasden** directs.

**The Perez Family** (1995) **Marisa Tomei** (**My Cousin Vinny** 1992) is Dottie Perez, a young Cuban woman with dreams of America that include Rock & Roll and cowboys. **Alfred Molina** (**Frida** 2002) wants to be reunited with his wife (**Angelica Houston**), who is in America. But when they reach America as Cuban refugees, they are listed as married to one another, greatly complicating things for both of them. Directed by **Mira Nair** (**Mississippi Masala**).

**My Family** (1995) Directed and co-written by **Gregory Nava** (writer of **El Norte** 1984, **Frida** 2002), this film chronicles three generations of a Mexican American family. Beginning with the journey Jose Sanchez (**Jacob Vargas**) makes on foot to Los Angeles, the plot follows the family through their adjustment to life in America.

**The Joy Luck Club** (1993) **Wayne Wang** (**Smoke** 1995) directed this adaptation of Amy Tan's bestselling novel. It is the story of four Chinese women who immigrated to the U.S. and their first-generation daughters. When one of the women dies, her daughter, June (**Ming-Na**) plays Mahjong with the older women and begins to really learn what her mother endured in China and of her sisters who were left behind.

**Masala** (1993) The first film by director **Srinivas Krishna**, this black comedy is told with eccentric characters. The story follows a young Indian man, played by Krishna, himself, who immigrates to Toronto after his family is killed in a plane crash. The film is rich in story, characters, and color.

**The Wedding Banquet** (1993) This comedy by **Ang Lee** (**Sense and Sensibility** 1995) is the story of a successful Taiwanese man (**Winston Chao**) in New York whose parents insist it is time he marry. Rather than confess to them that he is gay, he plans a fake marriage to a young artist (**May Chin**). She is interested only in the green card, but his parents want an

elaborate banquet!

**Heaven and Earth** (1993) The final chapter of director **Oliver Stone's** (**Born on the Fourth of July** 1989, **Platoon** 1986) trilogy on the Vietnam War, **Heaven and Earth** is about a soldier (**Tommy Lee Jones**) and the Vietnamese wife (**Hiep Thi Le**) he brings home. Though they have left Vietnam, the effects are far from behind them.

**Combination Platter** (1993) Presented at Cannes in 1993 for **Tony Chen's** direction, this is his first American film, which is partly in English and partly in Cantonese and Mandarin with subtitles. The setting is a Chinese restaurant in Flushing, New York. Some employees are American-born Chinese (ABCs), some are from China, some are American. The story centers around Robert (**Jeff Lau**) who will do anything for his green card. Friends encourage him to marry a citizen, but he is not comfortable with non-Asian women.

**Household Saints** (1993) Through two short films, director **Nancy Savoca** (**The 24 Hour Woman** 2000) tells us the story of three generations of women in a post-World War II Little Italy, New York. Catherine Falconetti (**Tracy Ullman**) is forced into a loveless marriage to (**Vincent D'Onofrio**) Joseph Santangelo, complete with Mrs. Santangelo - the old-world mother-in-law. When the matriarch dies, Catherine ushers her family into a 20th century America, complete with bright colors and Tupperware. Their daughter Teresa (**Lili Taylor**), however, is not following her parents willingly. Steeped in the tradition of Catholicism, Teresa's goal is sainthood.

**Mississippi Masala** (1992) **Denzel Washington** (**Training Day** 2001, **The Hurricane** 1999) and **Sarita Choudhury** (**Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love** 1996) star in this story of cross-cultural romance in the Deep South. She is the daughter of an Indian immigrant family who came to the U.S. by way of Uganda. He is the African American she runs into - literally. Directed by **Mira Nair** (**Monsoon Wedding** 2001).

**The Mambo Kings** (1992) Two musician brothers (**Armand Assante** and **Antonio Banderas**) decide to leave Cuba in the 1950s to break into the hot, Latin music scene in New York. **Desi Arnez, Jr.** plays his father in this film, who is but one real life example of the fact behind this work of fiction. In his first English-language role, Banderas did not yet speak any English, but learned his lines phonetically.

**Far and Away** (1992) **Ron Howard** (**A Beautiful Mind** 2001, **Splash** 1984) directed **Tom Cruise** and **Nicole Kidman** in this film that manages to tell the story of both poor and wealthy immigrants from Ireland. While there was a distinct class separation when the two were in their homeland, upon reaching New York they were both despised as Irish. This is the story of their quest for the American dream.

**Green Card** (1990) Directed by **Peter Weir** (**The Year of Living Dangerously** 1982, **Dead Poets Society** 1989), this romantic comedy is about George (**Gerard Depardieu**) and Bronte (**Andie MacDowell**). He is from Paris and wants a green card. She is an American who needs a husband to qualify for the green house apartment of her dreams. When the INS gets involved, this is anything but a match made in heaven - or is it?

**Avalon** (1990) In this film, writer / director **Barry Levinson** (**Rain Man** 1988), chronicles a Jewish family that immigrates to the United States from Poland in pursuit of the American dream. Starring **Leo Fuchs**, **Joan Plowright** (**Enchanted April** 1992), **Aidan Quinn**, **Elizabeth Perkins**, and a 9-year-old **Elijah Wood** (**Lord of the Rings** 2003). How does America change them?

**The Paper Wedding** (1990) Made before, but released after **Green Card**, this is the story of a university professor

(Genevieve Bujold) who marries a Chilean dissident (Manuel Aranguiz) as a favor to her sister who is an immigration lawyer. Directed by Michel Brault (*Mon Amie Max* 1994), everything seems simple and straight forward, until the immigration investigation begins. Now they must live together. With English subtitles.

**Eat a Bowl of Tea** (1989) Wayne Wong (*Joy Luck Club* 1993) directed this film about a young ChineseAmerican soldier (Russell Wong) who returns from WWII and is bullied by his father (Victor Wong) into an arranged marriage with a Chinese girl (Cora Miao). Wong's film is about a search for ethnic identity.

**Coming to America** (1988) Eddie Murphy (*Shrek* 2001) and Arsenio Hall star in this hilarious film by director John Landis (*Blues Brothers* 2000). On his 21st birthday, the Prince of Zamunda is to marry a woman he has never met. Breaking with tradition, he chooses to come to America, in search of the love of his life.

**Stand and Deliver** (1988) This is the inspiring true story about an immigrant teacher working in his Hispanic community in L.A. To the credit of Jaime Escalante (Edward James Olmos) and his creative teaching, students in one of the country's toughest neighborhoods turn from gang life to become top algebra and calculus students. Escalante believed in them when no one else cared. Olmos (*Selena* 1997) was nominated for an Academy Award for his role, as was Lou Diamond Phillips (*La Bamba*) for a supporting role as one of the students. Directed by Ramon Menendez.

**Born in East L.A.** (1987) Comedian Cheech Marin directed, wrote, and stars in this comedy about Rudy, who is caught in an INS sweep of illegal workers at a factory. Without any ID, Rudy is unable to convince authorities that he is American, and ends up deported to Mexico with no knowledge of Spanish and no idea how to get back home.

**Living on Tokyo Time** (1987) Ken (Ken Nakagawa) is shy and into rock & roll. Kyoko (Minako Ohashi) is beautiful and determined. Introduced by a mutual friend, Ken marries Kyoko, whose green card is expiring, so that she can remain in the U.S. And then the unexpected happens when he falls in love with her. Directed by Steven Okazaki (*Black Tar Heroin: The Dark End of the Street* 2000). Nominated for the 1987 Grand Jury Prize at Sundance.

**An American Tale** (1986) This animated musical directed by Don Bluth is the story of the Mouskowitz family - a family of Jewish mice living in Russia at the time of the revolution. They have dreams of America, the land with no cats where all the streets are paved with cheese. When the youngest becomes separated from his family, he learns life lessons of tolerance, survival, and the strength of the familial bond. With the voices of Dom DeLuise, Madeline Kahn, and Christopher Plummer.

**Dim Sum : A Little Bit of Heart** (1985) Chinese immigrant, Mrs. Tam (Kim Chew), is told by a fortune-teller that this is the year she will die. She longs to return to China to pay her respects to her ancestors. She is also longing for her daughter, Geraldine (Laureen Chew), to marry. A sweet portrayal of this Chinese American family in San Francisco. Another film from director Wayne Wang (*Joy Luck Club* 1993).

**Stranger Than Paradise** (1984) Director Jim Jarmusch (*Coffee and Cigarettes* 2004) influenced the direction of American independent filmmakers with his unusual style in this film. Eva (Eszter Balint) is moving to the U.S. from Eastern Europe and informs her cousin, Willie (John Lurie), that she will be staying with him for ten days before going on to their aunt in Ohio. Willie, a small-time gambler, tells his friend, Eddie (Richard Edson), that she will cramp their style, but Eddie likes Eva. Willie introduces her to American TV and TV dinners and Eva proves to be surprisingly street savvy, herself.

**Moscow on the Hudson** (1984) Touring the U.S. with a band during the cold war, a Soviet saxophone player, played by

**Robin Williams** (*Good Will Hunting* 1988, *Good Morning, Vietnam* 1987), defects to the U.S. while in Bloomingdale's. But adjusting to American life is more difficult than he imagines. Directed by **Paul Mazursky** (*Harry and Tonto* 1974).

**El Norte** (1983) The Guatemalan army discovers Mayan Indian peasants who have begun to organize, hoping to rise above their label of "brazos fuertes" or "strong arms" (manual laborers). The army massacres their families and destroys their village to give the new recruits no choice but to follow and obey. However, two teenage siblings survive and are determined to escape to the U.S. or El Norte. They get to L.A. - uneducated, illegal immigrants, alone.

**Sophie's Choice** (1982) **Meryl Streep** (*Kramer vs. Kramer* 1979, *Angels in America* 2003) is breathtaking in her Oscar-winning role as Sophie, a Polish Catholic survivor of Auschwitz who makes her way to the U.S. after the war. Also with **Kevin Klein** (*A Fish Called Wanda* 1988) and **Peter MacNicol**. Directed by **Alan J. Pakula** (*The Sterile Cuckoo* 1969, *Klute* 1971), the son of a Polish immigrant.

**The Godfather, Part II** (1974) All of the films in this **Francis Ford Coppola** (Academy Award, Best Director, 1975) trilogy surround the Corleone family. The ties between the family in New York and the family in Sicily are depicted in a way in this film, especially, that is likely felt on some level by all immigrant families in the U.S. **Robert di Niro** (Academy Award for this supporting character, 1975) portrays the young Vito and learned Italian in order to be as authentic as possible in the role.

**Popi** (1969) **Alan Arkin** (*The Russians are Coming, the Russians are Coming* 1966) and **Rita Moreno** (*West Side Story* 1962) star in this comedy about a Puerto Rican widower, living in Harlem, who puts his children aboard a raft off of Florida's coast. Scheming for a better life for his family, Popi believes the cute "asylum-seekers from Cuba" will win hearts in America. Directed by **Arthur Hiller** (*Love Story* 1971).

**The Party** (1968) **Peter Sellers** (*Dr. Strangelove* 1964, *Being There* 1980) shines in this **Blake Edwards** (*Honorary Award* 2004) comedy, which has become a classic full of unconventional humor. Sellers portrays an Indian actor who is mistakenly invited to a party intended for Hollywood executives. The clash of cultures and Sellers's comedic talents are sure to give you more than a belly laugh or two!

**America, America** (1963) Written and directed by **Elia Kazan** (*On the Waterfront* 1954), this story begins around 1900 with a poor Greek in Turkey. A second-class citizen there, selling ice in the marketplace and enduring humiliation on a daily basis, he is determined to escape to America by way of Constantinople. Starring **Stavros Topouzoglou** and **Vartan Damadian**.

**West Side Story** (1961) **Robert Wise** and **Jerome Robbins** directed this Oscar-winning musical. It's a modern-day Romeo and Juliet story, or it was 40+ years ago when it was made. Rather than feuding families, however, the plot centers around two New York street gangs. Maria (**Natalie Wood**) is a Puerto Rican immigrant whose brother belongs to the Sharks, and Tony (**Richard Beymer**) is the American boy she loves, who is a former member of the Jets. Once a Jet, always a Jet?

**I Remember Mama** (1948) **Barbara Bel Geddes** portrays an aspiring writer and daughter of Norwegian immigrant parents, played by **Irene Dunn** and **Edgar Bergen**. A warm tale of a close-knit family and children who believe their Mama can do anything. Nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Black & White Cinematography, Best Actress (Miss Dunn) and three Best Supporting Actress nominations, including for Miss Bel Geddes.

**My Girl Tisa** (1948) Overlooked because of the political climate when it was released, this film portrays the New York lower East Side society of the period. Boarding houses, looking for work, the constant fear of deportation, the anxiety over

the citizenship test. German-born actress **Lilli Palmer** stars as Tisa and **Sam Wanamaker** (nominated for an Emmy for his 1978 role in **Holocaust**) is the attorney who helps her. Directed by **Elliott Nugent**.

**Music in My Heart** (1940) This old musical stars **Rita Hayworth** (*Gilda*, 1946) as the American beauty living in an immigrant neighborhood of New York with her kid sister, when she collides (literally) with **Tony Martin**, a penniless actor who is being deported. Full of plot twists and characters with complicated relationships, this film even has a lovesick monkey!

**The Immigrant** (1917) This is a classic for film students. **Charlie Chaplin** (*Limelight* 1952, *The Great Dictator* 1940) stars in this silent picture about his little tramp, traveling steerage to immigrate to the U.S. with the throngs who came at the beginning of the 1900s. He shows us what this felt like with the humor and poignancy only Chaplin possessed.

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**AKA Don Bonus** (National Asian American Telecommunications Association, 1995)

Directed by Spencer Nakasako and Sokly Ny; Produced by Spencer Nakasako and Sokly Ny

Running time: 55 minutes; MPAA rating: Not rated

Home video: National Asian American Telecommunications Association

Synopsis: Filmmaker Sokly Ny, a Cambodian refugee whose family came to America in the late 1970s to escape the Khmer Rouge, settled in Sunnyvale, Calif. This documentary, called a video self-portrait, shows the life that Ny, who called himself Don Bonus in high school, led in the United States. The clashes between Cambodian and American cultures, and the economic and racial issues that can divide or unite an immigrant family are illustrated through interviews and looks into Ny's life.

**...and the earth did not swallow him** (American Playhouse, 1994)

Directed by Severo Perez; Directed by Paul Espinosa

Running time: 99 minutes; MPAA rating: Not rated

Home video: VHS, Kino Home Video Synopsis: Based on a semi-autobiographical novella by Tomas Rivera, this film produced for the PBS series American Playhouse dramatizes the relationship of a 12-year-old boy, the son of migrant Mexican-American workers, who travel throughout the Midwest seeking work. Despite the harshness of their life, the family's strong bonds keep them together.

**Uneasy Neighbors** Directed by Paul Espinosa

This 1990s award-winning documentary profiles the relations between migrant worker camps and homeowners in north San Diego county, one of the richest and fastest-growing areas in the U.S. Here, sharing the same valleys, are homeowners concerned about property values and sanitation, and migrant workers living in conditions that most Americans expect only in the Third World. This documentary chronicles the life and death of the Green Valley camp, home to thousands of migrant workers.

"...shows the human side of a problem that is too-often couched in political rhetoric..." Los Angeles Times

"an illuminating lesson in the misery suffered by too many people in this smugly, callously prosperous community." San Diego Union

**Bad Day at Black Rock** (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1955)

Directed by John Sturges; Produced by Dore Schary

Screenplay by Millard Kaufman; adaptation by Don McGuire; based on the short story "Bad Time at Honda," by Howard Breslin; Cast: Spencer Tracy, Robert Ryan; Running time: 81; MPAA rating: Not rated. Home video: VHS, Warner Home Video

Synopsis: In the summer of 1945, stranger John Maccreedy arrives in a small, hostile Arizona town to give a medal, posthumously awarded to a Japanese-American soldier, to his father. Maccreedy soon learns that the father has been murdered by racists who were trying to cheat him and drive him from his land.

**La Bamba** (Columbia, 1987)

Directed by Luis Valdez; Produced by Bill Borden, Taylor Hackford; Screenplay by: Luis Valdez  
Cast: Lou Diamond Phillips, Esai Morales, Rosana De Sota; Running time: 108; MPAA rating: PG-13  
Home video: VHS, DVD, Sony Home Video

Synopsis: In the 1950s, Mexican-American Ritchie Valenzuela rises from poverty in central California to become "Ritchie Valens," one of the most popular singers of the rock and roll era. He strives to give his mother and younger siblings a good home, while his jealous older brother takes a different path; despite his fame, Ritchie's heritage installs prejudice in the parents of his Anglo girl friend Donna, made famous in his hit record.

**Come See the Paradise** (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1990)

Directed by Alan Parker; Produced by Robert F. Colesbury; Screenplay by Alan Parker  
Cast: Dennis Quaid, Tamlyn Tomita; Running time: 138; MPAA rating: R  
Home video: VHS, Twentieth Century-Fox Home Video

Synopsis: At the outbreak of World War II, a loyal Japanese-American family living in Los Angeles is forced into a Japanese internment camp. The harshness of their lives in the camp is simultaneous to problems suffered by their Anglo son-in-law, a union organizer who cannot help his family and goes AWOL before the end of the war.

**Hito-Hata: Raise the Banner** (Visual Communications, 1980)

Directed by Duane Kubo; Produced by Robert Nakamura; Cast: Mako, Pat Morita  
Running time: 90; MPAA rating: Not rated; Home video: National Asian American Telecommunications Association

Synopsis: Hito-Hata, the first full length film produced by and about Asian-Pacific Americans, dramatizes the life of the elderly Oda, an Issei who worked on the transcontinental railroad and now lives alone in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles. Oda's difficult past is juxtaposed with his fight to save his neighbors from losing their homes to land developers.

**Mi Familia/My Family** (New Line Cinema, 1995)

Directed by Gregory Nava; Produced by Francis Ford Coppola, Anna Thomas; Screenplay by Gregory Nava, Anna Thomas; Cast: Jimmy Smits, Edward James Olmos, Esai Morales; Running time: 126; MPAA rating: R; Home video: VHS, New Line

Synopsis: The film follows several decades in the lives of a Mexican-American couple as they go through life together, often facing poverty, prejudice, police brutality and family trials. As their children grow to adulthood, each takes a different path in life, and each reflects the changing atmosphere, opportunities and continued restrictions in Los Angeles' Hispanic community from the 1940s through the 1990s.

**My Man and I** (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1954)

Directed by Stephen Ames; Produced by William A. Wellman; Screenplay by Joe Fante, Jack Leonard  
Cast: Ricardo Montalban, Shelley Winters, Wendell Corey; Running time: 98 minutes; MPAA rating: Not rated; Home video: Currently unavailable

Synopsis: In Sacramento, recently naturalized Mexican farm worker Chu Chu Ramirez, greatly values his new citizenship and writes to the president to express his pride. The affable Chu Chu tries to better himself, despite his friends' scorn and girlfriend's cynicism. When an Anglo farmer falsely accuses him of robbery, Chu Chu's optimism is tested.

**El Norte** (Artisan Entertainment, 1983)

Directed by Gregory Nava; Produced by Anna Thomas; Screenplay by Gregory Nava, Anna Thomas  
Cast: Zaide Silvia Gutierrez, David Villapando; Running time: 139; MPAA rating: R;

Synopsis: Originally produced for PBS's American Playhouse, "El Norte" is a Spanish-language film that focuses on brother and sister Enrique and Rosa Xuncax, who flee their native Guatemala and eventually make their way to "El Norte," the United States. Once in Los Angeles, the pair discover that their dreams are not so easily attained in the often harsh and hostile environment for illegal aliens in the city.

**Oaxacalifornia** (University of California, 1995)

Directed by Sylvia Stevens; Produced by Trisha Ziff; Running time: 57 minutes; MPAA rating: Not rated

Home video: Currently unavailable

Synopsis: This documentary examines the lives and cultural contrasts between the generations of Mexican-American families, by focusing on the Medjia family of Fresno, Calif. Externally, the Medjias seem to be an "all American family," but their Jalisco, Oaxaca, Mexico, heritage is never far from the surface, as this look at the daily life of the family reveals.

**Zoot Suit** (1981) Directed and written by: Luis Valdez, based on his play "Zoot Suit." Stars Edward James Olmos. During

World War II Los Angeles was the site of the Sleepy Lagoon murders case. Several young Mexican-Americans, - "Zoot suiters" - were put in prison, even though the evidence was minimal. The film, looks at the bias and racism that caused their incarceration.