

Selena is a Plot Device in Her Show

Zully Sosa layout editor

Selena Quintanilla was a Tejano singer and fashion designer known as one of the top-selling Latin American artists of all time. Quintanilla was murdered on March 31, 1995 by Yolanda Saldívar, president of her official fan club. Nearly 25 years after the adored film release of "Selena," starring Jennifer Lopez, Netflix released part one of "Selena: the Series" last Friday.

"Selena: The Series" is an attempt for the family to gain personal recognition. Quintanilla's legacy is used as a plot device to detail the hard work and sacrifices the family made to get the band where it is today. If the family was actually interested in telling their story, a documentary featuring themselves would do; however, it's clear that creating this series offered more gain as the spotlight doesn't include Quintanilla's perspective. It's unfair to claim others sacrificed more when she paid the price of fame with her life and they are still here, profiting off her tragic death 25 years later.

With every biographical film or series, the cast list allows the audience to begin gauging its quality. For "Selena: the Series," the lead casting of Christian Serratos as Selena Quintanilla sparked controversy as Serratos did not have Quintanilla's thick curly hair, full red lips and proudly curvaceous body.

Why was Serratos casted as Quintanilla when she does not have so many of Quintanilla's celebrated Mexican-American features? It was clear that Serratos, who is Italian-Mexican, would need a lot of assistance from the makeup department to change her Eurocentric facial features and light skin.

In addition to failing to meet appearance expectations, Serratos' performance was not impressive. Even though Jennifer Lopez's portrayal of Quintanilla came only two years after her death, it was met with high praise as Lopez captured Quintanilla's unique stage charisma and recreated every dance breakdown. Serratos' ability to emulate Quintanilla's magic in the new Netflix series pales in comparison. She struggled to believably lip sync the songs and Quintanilla's original choreography was clearly downplayed to match Serratos' performance inexperience.

While the film celebrates Selena Quintanilla's career and personal life, the series puts her life on the backburner in order to explore different themes. Subplots of her father and siblings fill the time, portraying their contributions. The scenes were overdramatized and gave off the impression that the producers knew this isn't what you were expecting, but it was just as important to the story as the titular's

experience was. However, the result of this framing is that it doesn't pay attention to Quintanilla and her role within the band and family; instead, it's framed as though everyone else was working tirelessly to rise to fame and Selena was simply a pretty face and voice.

Before the arrival of her future guitarist and husband, the only personal scenes fans get to see of Quintanilla are her comforting her family members or planning costume designs. The show offers clips of her buying glitter, a comment on the inaffordability of quality clothes and a scene of her showing pieces to the record label. Quintanilla is never focused on for an entire episode, or even an epic montage, like her brother's song creations are. Her other lifetime achievements, such as opening her own boutique filled with original designs, have yet to be focused on in part one of this series.

It's also important to note that Quintanilla's sister was an executive producer for "Selena: the Series." This is standard as Quintanilla's father was an executive producer for the film "Selena" and organized collaborations under her name such as MAC cosmetic lines. As this is the only work anyone in the family has been doing for several decades, it's clear that they are still financially dependent on their late relative.

E