



GRADES 7-12 CLASSROOM GUIDE

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TEACHING THE FILM:

Dolores is a documentary film about the life and work of legendary civil rights activist Dolores Huerta. A class screening of the film may complement a US history, social studies or ethnic studies curriculum. Taught in conjunction with this guide, the film will empower students to think critically about the ongoing fight for equal rights for people of color and women in the United States, and about the meaning of sustained activism, both personally and politically. Discussion questions and supplemental materials facilitate further research into related topics such as intersectional feminism, Chicano/Chicana cultural identity, and the importance of recognizing the work of activists in the American cultural narrative.

All SFFILM Education materials are developed in alignment with California educational standards for media literacy. SFFILM Education welcomes feedback and questions on all printed study materials.

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USING THIS GUIDE

This study guide is intended to flexibly support educators in preparing for and following up on a class screening of **Dolores**.

Support materials are intended to facilitate group discussion, individual and collaborative creative exercise, subject-based learning and access to resources for further investigation of material. Educators are encouraged to adapt and abridge the content as necessary to meet their unique learning objectives and circumstances.

ABOUT THE FILM

Dolores Huerta wanted to be a dancer. Instead, as Angela Davis marvels in Peter Bratt's essential historical documentary, she became "a dancer on the stage of justice." A talented and tireless community organizer, Huerta discovered her purpose among the perennially exploited Latinx laboring for Northern California agribusinesses. She founded the United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez in 1962 and directed the decisive national boycott of Delano grapes that impelled the growers to sign labor contracts. Despite her remarkable record of success, however, she encountered resistance as the lone woman on the UFW board. Still, nothing could slow Huerta's war on poverty, pesticides, injustice, and racism—until a San Francisco cop badly injured her during a Union Square protest of then Vice President George H.W. Bush in 1988. Bratt deploys remarkable and little-seen archival footage along with highly emotional interviews with many of Huerta's 11 children. Their sacrifices, along with hers, are shown as heartbreaking but necessary elements of this major, often overlooked, chapter in California history.

Program Note: brief profanity, brief violence in news footage

{ Directed by Peter Bratt
USA 2017, runtime 98 minutes
In English and Spanish with English subtitles
Grades: 7-12 }

Recommended Subject Areas:

Ethics/Religion
History
Journalism
Latin American Studies
Political Science
Social Science
Social Studies
Spanish
Women's Studies
World/Current Affairs



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRE-VIEWING TOPICS AND DISCUSSION:

Dolores Huerta's work is vastly important, but she is less well known than her male counterparts, particularly Cesar Chavez. Before watching the film, you might ask students what they know about Dolores Huerta. What was her role and her impact in advocating for Latino civil rights?

You may revisit this topic after students have watched the film, and discuss why her role is sometimes marginalized.

POST-VIEWING DISCUSSION:

Character and Story

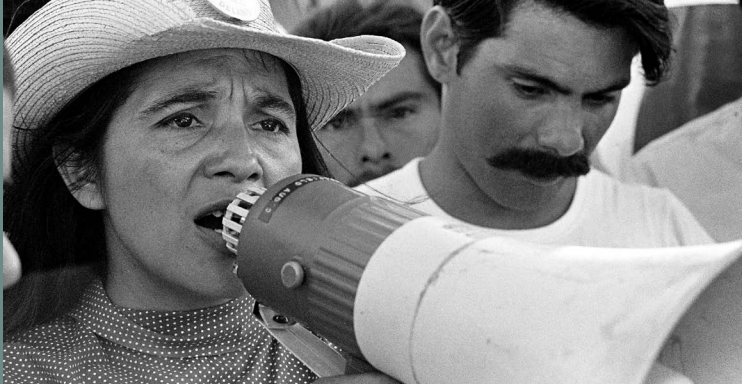
- 1) Who is Dolores Huerta?
 - How did she become an activist?
 - What issues motivated her?
 - How did she connect with other organizers and begin her work?
 - What role did the farmworkers movement play in Huerta's life?
- 2) What kind of a woman is Dolores Huerta?
 - How did she break from stereotypes surrounding womanhood and femininity?
 - How did she respond to challenges and criticism?
- 3) What kind of a mother is Dolores Huerta?
 - How was she influenced by her own mother?
 - What impacts, positive and negative, did her choices make on her children?
 - What sacrifices did Huerta make for her work?
- 4) What kind of a role model is Dolores Huerta?
 - What did her work mean for Latino identity, pride and self-respect?

WHO IS DOLORES HUERTA?

- Describe the larger cultural impact of the farmworker's movement. How did it touch the lives of Latino people beyond the farms?
- Why is it important to see Latina women and women of color in leadership roles? What impact does a trailblazer like Dolores Huerta have on future generations?

Context

- 1) What is a union?
 - What impact did the United Farm Workers have on the lives of the union members?
 - What role do unions play in the American economy today? What is the current political discourse surrounding unions?
 - If you were working as a labor organizer today, where would you focus your energy? Are unions still relevant? Who needs a union and why?
- 2) The term "wage slavery" is used repeatedly in the film. What is wage slavery?
 - What is agribusiness?
 - What was the relationship between workers and bosses in the agribusiness economy of the 1960s?
 - How did race and ethnicity factor into relationships between bosses and workers? How did racism compound unequal power dynamics?
- 3) What strategies did Huerta and Cesar Chavez use to organize farm workers? How did they connect with the workers?
 - What additional challenges did the farmworkers' status as immigrants pose to the effort to organize? Why was it so important to give workers a path toward citizenship?
 - What is a strike and what is a boycott? Why are these strategies effective?



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- What does Huerta mean when she says “the power is in the body”? How can that attitude be applied to social and political action today?
- 4) What was the relationship of the farm worker’s movements to the other social movements of the 1960s?
- How did the farm worker’s movement overlap with the environmental movement? What is the meaning of environmental justice?
 - How did Huerta and the farmworker’s movement engage with the struggle for women’s rights? Why was it important to have women in the movement?
 - What challenges did Huerta and other women of color face when they sought to collaborate with the feminist movement?
 - What is the meaning of the term intersectionality? Why is it important for activists to recognize interconnected systems of oppression? Why do connected social movements have more power to create meaningful change?

WHAT DOES
HUERTA MEAN
WHEN SHE SAYS:
THE POWER IS IN
THE BODY?

Style and Message/Reading the Film for Media Literacy

1) This film is an inspiring portrait of Dolores Huerta, in part because she is an imperfect hero. Her children suffered because of her commitment to her work.

- Why do you think the filmmakers chose to include the sadness of Huerta’s children in the film?
- How do the experiences of Huerta’s children complicate the portrait that the film makes of her?

- Would the film have been stronger or weaker if the filmmakers had painted a more glowing portrait of Huerta as a mother?

2) Dolores Huerta said that she wanted to be a dancer; Angela Davis says that she became a dancer on the stage of social justice.

- What role does music and dancing play in this film?
- What does music and dance add to this film?
- What does the music and the dancing communicate about Dolores Huerta, her work, and her times?

3) Why is it important to learn about activists like Dolores Huerta?

- What do you think is this film’s position on the Arizona law banning Ethnic Studies from public schools?
- What is the struggle for memory? Who controls what we learn and what we remember?
- Why does it matter who writes a history book and who appears in its pages?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES:

1) Start a conversation with a family member, a friend, or a neighbor about the life and work of Dolores Huerta.

What do they know about Huerta? Where did they encounter her legacy?

Can you tell them anything they don't know?

Did you learn anything that you didn't know?

Write a short essay reflecting on the experience.

2) Journaling Activity: Reflect on the film.

Why is it important to watch films and tell stories about American history?

What did you learn from watching **Dolores**?

What issues from the film remain relevant today?



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California Media Literacy Standards Addressed In This Lesson:

- Grade 7: Standard 1.8 Analyze the effect on the viewer of images, text, and sound in electronic journalism; identify the techniques used to achieve the effects in each instance studied.
- Grade 8: Standard 1.9 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, illustrators, news photographers) communicate information and affect impressions and opinions.
- Grades 9 & 10: Standard 1.14 Identify the aesthetic effects of a media presentation and evaluate the techniques used to create them (e.g., compare Shakespeare's Henry V with Kenneth Branagh's 1990 film version).
- Grades 9 & 10: Standard 1.2 Compare and contrast the ways in which media genres (e.g., televised news, news magazines, documentaries, online information) cover the same event.
- Grades 11 & 12: Standard 1.1 Recognize strategies used by the media to inform, persuade, entertain, and transmit culture (e.g., advertisements; perpetuation of stereotypes; use of visual representations, special effects, language); Standard 1.3 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which events are presented and information is communicated by visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, documentary filmmakers, illustrators, news photographers).

For more information about media literacy standards in your state, visit:

- MediaLiteracy.com: resources for advancing media education, United States Standards for media literacy education. <http://www.medialiteracy.com/standards.htm>
- Frank W Baker's guide to State Standards Which Include Elements of Media Literacy. http://frankwbaker.com/state_lit.htm

Common Core Standards Addressed In This Lesson:

This lesson addresses the English and Language Arts standards for Reading Informational Texts grades 9-12. Additional specific standard applications are listed below:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.



MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES

SCREENING WITH MEANING

We live in a world where technology mediates a large portion of human interaction and the exchange of information. Every projected image, every word published on a page or a website, and every sound from a speaker reaches its audience through the medium, through the language of the device. The ability to parse the vast array of media messages is an essential skill for young people, particularly in a mainstream commercial culture that targets youth as a vulnerable, impressionable segment of the American marketplace. Most students already have a keen understanding of the languages different media use and the techniques they employ to inspire particular emotions or reactions, but they often lack the skill or awareness to fully deconstruct the messages they continuously receive.

Analysis of a media message—or any piece of mass media content—can best be accomplished by first identifying its principal characteristics:

- (1) Medium: the physical means by which it is contained and/or delivered
- (2) Author: the person(s) responsible for its creation and dissemination
- (3) Content: the information, emotions, values or ideas it conveys
- (4) Audience: the target audience to whom it is delivered
- (5) Purpose: the objectives of its authors and the effects of its dissemination.

Students who can readily identify these five core characteristics will be equipped to understand the incentives at work behind media messages, as well as their potential consequences. Media literacy education empowers students to become responsible consumers, active citizens and critical thinkers.

CORE CONCEPTS OF MEDIA

MEDIUM	<p>All Media Is Constructed.</p> <p>How is the message delivered and in what format?</p> <p>What technologies are used to present the message?</p> <p>What visual and auditory elements are used?</p>
AUTHOR	<p>What expectations do you bring to the content, given its medium and format?</p> <p>All Media Is Constructed by Someone.</p> <p>Who is delivering the message?</p> <p>Who originally constructed the message?</p> <p>What expectations do you have of the content, given its author(s)?</p>
CONTENT	<p>All Media Is A Language.</p> <p>What is the subject of the media message?</p> <p>What information, values, emotions or ideas are conveyed by the media content?</p> <p>What tools does the author employ to engage the viewer and evoke a response?</p> <p>To what extent did the content meet your expectations, given the format/author?</p>
AUDIENCE	<p>All Media Messages Reach an Audience.</p> <p>Who receives the message?</p> <p>For whom is the message intended?</p> <p>What is the public reaction to the media content and/or its message?</p> <p>What is your reaction to the media content and/or its message?</p> <p>How might others perceive this message differently? Why?</p>
PURPOSE	<p>All Media Messages Are Constructed for a Reason.</p> <p>Why was the message constructed?</p> <p>Who benefits from dissemination of the message? How?</p> <p>To what extent does the message achieve its purpose?</p> <p>What effect does the message have on the audience it reaches, if any?</p>



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THE NON-FICTION FILM WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY?

A documentary is a film whose goal is to capture truth, fact or reality as seen through the lens of the camera. But there are many kinds of documentaries, and not everyone's idea of truth is the same. The Scottish filmmaker John Grierson coined the term "documentary" in 1926 to describe American filmmaker Robert Flaherty's romanticized culture studies, but nonfiction filmmaking dates back to the earliest motion picture reels.

The definition of documentary expanded as filmmakers experimented with technology and the goals of nonfiction. Avant-garde documentarians, like Dziga Vertov in the 1920s, believed that the mechanical eye of the camera gave a truer image of reality than the human eye and pointed his lens at newly industrialized cities. Leni Reifenstahl's propaganda films from Nazi Germany used the nonfiction form to convey a political message, a slanted truth. The international cinema vérité or observational movements of the 1960s attempted to remove authorship from the documentary. The observational filmmaker hovered like a "fly on the wall" watching the world without commentary. Modern documentaries often seek to raise awareness about a social, environmental or political issue, guiding their audiences toward civic participation and activism.

While watching a documentary, it is important to remember the core concepts of media analysis: who made the film, for what audience and why? The nonfiction format can be deceptively subjective, as all filmmaking involves an inherent selection process: in the images that are shot, the music and narration that accompanies them and, most significantly, the way in which they are all edited together. Media literacy means always analyzing a documentary for its message and authorial intent.

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE DOCUMENTARY

1895 The Lumiere brothers developed the first motion picture film reels, capturing brief, unedited clips of life around them called "actualities" (e.g., Train Arriving at the Station)

1900-1920 Travelogue or "Scenic" films became popular, showcasing exoticised images from around the globe.

1926 John Grierson coined the term "documentary" to describe Robert Flaherty's romantic nonfiction film, *Moana*.

1929 Dziga Vertov, with the Soviet Kino-Pravda movement, released the experimental nonfiction film, *Man With a Movie Camera*.

1935 Leni Reifenstahl released *Triumph of the Will*, the infamous propaganda film that chronicled the 1934 Nazi Party Congress.

1939 John Grierson collaborated with the Canadian government to form the National Film Board of Canada, with the initial goal of creating Allied propaganda in support of the war.

1960s The cinema vérité movement began in Europe, shortly followed by "direct cinema" in the U.S. Portable cameras and sync sound allowed filmmakers to capture intimate footage with minimal intervention.

1968 The Argentine film, *La Hora de los Hornos* (The Hour of the Furnaces) opened the door to the activist cinema of the 1970s, which used film as a tool to counter capitalist and neo-colonial politics in Latin America.

1988 The US Congress mandated that the US government support the creation of independent non-commercial media, and the Independent Television Service (ITVS) was founded.

2000s The widespread use of digital cameras and editing software made the documentary medium vastly more affordable to independent and amateur filmmakers. Video sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo allowed amateur filmmakers to broadcast their work.

PRESENT DAY The term "documentary" has come to encompass a wide range of nonfiction cinema. Contemporary filmmakers continue to push the boundaries of truth in film and to explore new avenues and applications for the medium.



THE MAKING OF A DOCUMENTARY

Idea, Issue, Story.

Even though they are nonfiction films, most modern documentaries structure their content around a traditional story arc, with a beginning, middle and end, as well as characters, and a conclusion, theme or thesis to impart to the audience. Documentary filmmakers begin their projects with an idea or an issue that they wish to explore more deeply. Through research and planning, they develop a comprehensive plan before they begin shooting.

The Production Process.

To capture candid moments on film, modern documentary makers often leave the camera running, collecting far more footage than the final film requires. They may do this during interviews or in observational-style encounters with their subjects. To get increased access and an observational aesthetic, documentary makers often use handheld cameras and natural light, rather than staging a more formal filming environment.

Post-Production and the Documentary.

Because a documentary film relies upon candid footage, a large part of the film's construction occurs in the editing room, where you work with what you've captured. A documentary editor will sift through long interviews just to find a few phrases that will summarize the film's message. To emphasize important points and build the story, some documentaries use a voiceover,

an interview or a scripted narrative that brings candid footage together into a coherent statement. An original score can work alongside the voiceover to unify the footage and shape the mood of the film. Audiences often underestimate the power of sound to generate an emotional response. Many documentaries also use charts, graphs and historical footage to add context and emphasize key points.

Distribution.

Once a film is completed, the filmmaker needs to help it find its audience. Many documentaries are made independently on small budgets, but what's the point of all your work if no one hears your message? Some documentaries will be released in theaters around the country or get programmed on public or cable TV channels, but most documentary filmmakers will start by submitting their work to film festivals, in hopes of attracting distributors for the theater and television markets. Filmmakers may also make their films available online and use social media to reach their target audience.



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PBS: Labor Day Lesson Plan: Unions Today

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/negotiation-labormanagement-simulation/

Zinn Education Project: Labor Matters

<https://zinnedproject.org/materials/labor-matters/>

Library of Congress: Labor Unions and Working Conditions: United We Stand

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/labor/>

Fight For 15 Homepage

<http://fightfor15.org/>

Teaching Tolerance: United Farmworkers Lesson Plan

http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/kits/Viva%20Teachers%20Guide_web.pdf

PBS Learning Media: Organizing the Farm Worker Movement

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/91885268-61ee-4d40-b302-398d960ba9a4/latino-americans-organizing-the-farm-worker-movement-lesson-plan/#.WMiOJBlyvVo>

University of Washington: Understanding Protest Lesson Plan

http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/teach_boycott.htm

Mother Jones: "Right-to-Work Laws, Explained"

<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/03/what-are-right-to-work-laws>

PBS Learning Media: The Women's Movement:

<https://ca.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/the-womens-movement/>

Teaching Tolerance Video: Intersectionality 101

<http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2016/05/18/new-teaching-tolerance-video-intersectionality-101/comment-page-1/>

NAACP.org: Teaching Intersectionality and Environmental Justice in our Classrooms

<https://action.naacp.org/page/-/Climate/Teaching%20Intersectionality%20and%20Environmental%20Justice%20in%20Our%20Classrooms%20FINAL.pdf>

REVIEWS

The Hollywood Reporter

12:32 PM PST 1/30/2017 by Duane Byrge

Peter Bratt's doc pays tribute to Dolores Huerta, an undersung heroine of the workers' rights movement who was overshadowed in recognition by Cesar Chavez.

When people say, "Cesar Chavez," the conversation likely turns to the United Farm Workers and the grape strike. When people say "Dolores Huerta," the usual response is, "Dolores who?"

Dolores Huerta co-founded the UFWA along with Chavez, but is rarely given the credit. In Dolores, a U.S. Documentary Competition entry at the Sundance Film Festival, filmmaker Peter Bratt fleshes her out in fullest political and social dimension, but also captures her personal life and driven personality.

A mother of 11 during the course of three marriages, Huerta was a rolling stone even by 1960s and '70s standards. She regularly left her children with relatives or friends to dash off to rally farmworkers to stand up against the oppressive agribusiness industry. It's a comprehensive and earthy depiction of this pioneer Chicano workers' rights leader, a woman whose family extended to migrant strangers but who, essentially, put them before her own children. In this warts-and-all look at the woman, Bratt does not gloss over Huerta's shortcomings but paints clearly her contradictory nature.

Mixing historical footage and interviews with her family and pertinent social activists of "the day," Bratt distills the complexity of an unstoppable woman and the impact she brought not only to workers' rights but to the expanding role of women at that time. In essence, she never got her due: The face of the movement was always Chavez, not because he was in anyway a publicity hound, but because of the "women should be in the

home" values of the time.

Bratt certainly illuminates the uncertainty of her quest: the early dawns of heading out to rally strangers and the turmoil of a life fighting against superior, institutional forces. A spicy mix of talking heads round out the significance of Huerta's contribution: Angela Davis, Chavez and an array of progressive social activists of the time. In addition, dollops of opposition voices are displayed: Bill O'Reilly gives credence to Huerta's lack of credit and historical anonymity when he says, "I've never heard of this woman."

This documentary gives "this woman" her due.

Variety

by Dennis Harvey

Agricultural labor activist Dolores Huerta's eventful life is chronicled in Peter Bratt's energetic, engaging documentary.

Cesar Chavez remains the icon of U.S. agricultural labor rights, but his close colleague Dolores Huerta merits an equal place of reverence. Peter Bratt's energetic, engaging "Dolores" argues that only basic sexism has denied her that rightful status, while celebrating the 86-year-old's myriad accomplishments in a feature documentary whose running time necessarily condenses much of an exceptionally eventful, still-active life.

While Huerta may not yet get her full due in the history books (at least compared with the late Chavez), the fact that she is still regarded as a serious force by anti-union and other conservative forces was borne out a decade ago, when her observation that "Republicans hate Latinos" in a campus speech prompted her name to be banned from some public school curricula, among other enraged right-wing reactions. Huerta shrugged off the controversy, and indeed, one thing "Dolores" makes clear is that she doesn't care about being liked,



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so long as she is working toward the larger good. That stubborn indifference to most outside criticism is, in fact, one of the most likable things about her.

Huerta has sacrificed a conventional private life in order to be a highly public advocate and agitator. The verbal attacks against her have been primarily personal — many of them hinging on her two divorces, 11 children with three spouses, and her rejection of taking a “stay-at-home mom” role to raise them. She is dismissive of such criticism because it doesn’t reflect her values and priorities: Asked in one vintage TV interview if she ever yearns for “what most women want,” i.e. having their nails done and so forth, she call such things “wastes of time.” She’s also aware that a man with a similar history as hers would never have been judged a moral failure for emphasizing work over domestic life.

Bratt’s fast-paced chronology charts Huerta’s rapid rise to positions then unprecedented for a Latina: At age 25, she was already writing proposed legislation as part of California’s progressive Community Service Organization; at 30, she co-founded the Agricultural Workers Assn., which would eventually become United Farm Workers. The attempt to unionize field laborers in California, then nationally — many of them Spanish-speaking undocumented immigrants — was an exceptionally long, tortured, sometimes violent one that was vehemently opposed by most growers, who had police, the courts, and politicians on their side.

Aware of racial inequities from an early age, Huerta saw the often miserable labor conditions and pay for workers in agribusiness as a reflection of a racist power structure. She and Chavez “walked the walk” by living in the poor communities for which they advocated. While he was widely assumed to be the “true leader,” she was in fact the indefatigable architect of many attention-getting protest tactics.

Theirs was a stormy if highly productive relationship in which he, too, sometimes took umbrage at her unwillingness to take a deferential gender role. Decades later, that same tacit (and

sometimes not-so-tacit) gender bias was probably the principal cause behind her not gaining the UFW presidency after Chavez’s death, eventually leaving the union altogether to pursue her own, more diverse, interests of advocacy .

Many of the events depicted in here unfolded amid the backdrop (and with the support of) other, interrelated social-justice movements of the ’60s and ’70s, most notably Chicano Power and Women’s Liberation. Though Huerta herself was a model of female empowerment — often to the irritation of foes, as well as to the regret of the husbands and children from whom she was frequently absent — she was curiously slow at first to embrace the cause of empowerment. A close friendship with Gloria Steinem, among other factors, soon changed her thinking.

“Dolores” crams a great deal of information, themes, and diverse archival materials into a sharp, cogent whole, tied together by latter-day interviews with Huerta, family members, and esteemed colleagues/supporters from Steinem to Hillary Clinton, Angela Davis, Luis Valdez and Art Torres. (Detractors are only heard in TV news clips.)

Yet it feels a bit inorganic when Bratt can’t restraint himself from a celebratory climactic montage of people dancing, based on the thin pretext that Huerta once dreamed of being a professional dancer. Still, you can forgive him for wanting to communicate a sense of joyful gratitude, even if the object of his thanks maintains a single-minded focus that’s pretty much all business, all the time.