

= Murder of Selena =

Selena Quintanilla @-@ Pérez ( April 16 , 1971 ? March 31 , 1995 ) was an American singer who achieved international fame as a member of Selena y Los Dinos and for her subsequent solo career . Her father and manager , Abraham Quintanilla , Jr . , appointed Yolanda Saldívar president of Selena 's fan club in 1991 after Saldívar had repeatedly asked permission to start one . In January 1994 , Saldívar was promoted to manager of the singer 's boutiques . Selena 's employees , fashion designer , and cousin began complaining about Saldívar 's management style . In January 1995 , Quintanilla , Jr . , began receiving telephone calls and letters from angry fans who had sent membership payments and had received nothing in return . He began investigating their complaints and found evidence that Saldívar had embezzled \$ 60 @,@ 000 from the fan club and the boutiques using forged checks . After the Quintanilla family confronted her , Saldívar bought a gun , lured Selena to a motel room , and shot her in the back . Although doctors tried to revive Selena , she was pronounced dead from loss of blood and cardiac arrest .

The Hispanic community was deeply affected by the news of Selena 's death ; some people traveled thousands of miles to visit her house , boutiques , and the crime scene , while churches with large congregations of Hispanics held prayers in her name . All major television networks in the United States interrupted their regular programming to break the news . The public reaction to Selena 's death was compared to those that followed the deaths of John Lennon , Elvis Presley , and John F. Kennedy . Some Americans who were unaware of the singer and her popularity criticized the attention she and her murder received from both the media and the Hispanic community . Radio personality Howard Stern mocked Selena 's murder , burial , and her mourners and criticized her music , playing her songs with gunshots in the background , causing an uproar among the Hispanic population . On April 12 , 1995 ? two weeks after her death ? then @-@ Texas governor George W. Bush declared her birthday Selena Day in Texas . Some Americans were offended because Selena Day that year coincided with Easter .

At the time of Selena 's death , Tejano music was one of the most popular Latin music subgenres in the United States . She was called the " Queen of Tejano music " and became the first Hispanic artist to have a predominantly Spanish @-@ language album ? Dreaming of You ( 1995 ) ? debut and peak at number one on the US Billboard 200 chart . After her death , the popularity of Tejano music waned . During Saldívar 's trial for the murder ? called the " trial of the century " and the most important trial for the Hispanic population ? she said she accidentally shot Selena while attempting suicide . Saldívar was found guilty of murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment . Jennifer Lopez was cast as Selena in a 1997 biopic film about her life and became famous after the film 's release . Spanish @-@ language networks in the U.S. often broadcast documentaries about Selena on the anniversary of her death ; they are among the most @-@ watched programs in the history of American television and often score high ratings

= = Background = =

= = = The Selena fan club = = =

Selena was born on April 16 , 1971 , in Lake Jackson , Texas , to Abraham Quintanilla , Jr . , a former musician , and Marcella Ofelia Quintanilla ( née Samora ) . Selena was introduced to the music industry by her father , who saw " a way back into the music business " after discovering Selena 's " perfect timing and pitch " . He quickly organized his children into a band called Selena y Los Dinos , which included A.B. Quintanilla III on bass , Suzette Quintanilla on drums , and Selena as the lead singer . The band became the family 's main source of income after they were evicted from their home during the Texas oil bust of 1982 . They filed for bankruptcy after Quintanilla , Jr . 's Mexican restaurant suffered as a result of the oil bust . The family moved to Corpus Christi , Texas , and Selena y Los Dinos began recording music professionally . In 1984 , the band released its first LP record , Selena y Los Dinos , with a small , independent record company . Quintanilla , Jr . ,

wanted his children to record Tejano music ? a male @-@ dominated music genre popularized by Mexican Americans in the United States . Selena 's popularity as a singer grew after she won the Tejano Music Award for Female Vocalist of the Year in 1987 . She landed her first major record deal with Capitol EMI Latin in 1989 .

Yolanda Saldívar became a fan of Tejano music in the mid @-@ 1980s . She disliked Selena because she had won awards that Saldívar 's favorite Tejano musicians were nominated in . In mid @-@ 1991 , Saldívar attended one of Selena 's concerts in San Antonio , Texas with her niece . She became an ardent Selena fan ; she particularly enjoyed the singer 's stage presence and especially liked the song " Baila Esta Cumbia " . The day after the concert , Saldívar unsuccessfully searched news stands for a souvenir of the event . She got the idea of starting a Selena fan club in the San Antonio area to promote the singer . According to Quintanilla , Jr . , Saldívar tried contacting him and left him fifteen messages ; she said she left only three . Quintanilla , Jr . , contacted her to discuss her idea of starting a fan club . After meeting with Saldívar , he approved of her idea and gave her permission to proceed .

Saldívar became the founder and acting president of the Selena fan club in San Antonio in June 1991 . As president , she was responsible for membership benefits and collecting \$ 22 in exchange for products promoting Selena , a T @-@ shirt bearing the singer 's name , exclusive interviews with the band , a fact sheet about Selena y Los Dinos , and notifications of upcoming concerts . Proceeds from the fan club were donated to charities . Suzette was the contact person between Saldívar and the Quintanilla family ; Saldívar did not meet Selena until December 1991 . The two became close friends and the Quintanilla family trusted her . By 1994 , Saldívar had signed up more than 8 @, @ 000 fans . According to television news reporter and anchorwoman María Celeste Arrarás , Saldívar had become the " most efficient assistant " the singer ever had . Arrarás wrote that people noticed how eager Saldívar was to impress Selena , and did anything the singer told her to do . One person told Arrarás , " if Selena would say , ' Jump ! ' , [ Saldívar ] would jump three times " . Saldívar gave up her career as an in @-@ home nurse for patients with terminal cancer and respiratory diseases . She decided to fully invest her time in running the Selena fan club , although she was earning less than she had as a nurse .

= = = Selena Etc. boutiques = = =

In 1994 , Selena opened two boutiques called Selena Etc. in Corpus Christi and San Antonio ; they were equipped with in @-@ house beauty salons . Quintanilla , Jr . , thought Saldívar was a potential candidate to run the businesses because the family would be touring the country . He believed she was the best choice because of her success running the fan club . The family agreed ; in January 1994 , Saldívar became the manager of the boutiques . In September 1994 , Selena signed Saldívar as her registered agent in San Antonio . After being hired to run the boutiques , Saldívar moved from South San Antonio to Corpus Christi to be closer to Selena . In an interview with Primer Impacto in 1995 , Quintanilla , Jr . , said he " always mistrusted Saldívar " , though the family never found anything odd about Saldívar 's behavior . Saldívar was authorized to write and cash checks , and had access to bank accounts associated with the fan club and boutiques .

Selena gave Saldívar her American Express card for the purpose of conducting company business . Saldívar , however , instead used it to rent Lincoln Town Cars , entertain associates in upmarket restaurants , and buy two cellular telephones which she carried . Staff at Selena Etc. complained that Saldívar was always " nice " when Selena was around ; when she was not Saldívar treated everyone terribly . In December 1994 , the boutiques began to suffer . The company 's bank accounts lacked sufficient funds to pay bills . Staff levels at both stores had been reduced from thirty @-@ eight to fourteen employees , mainly because Saldívar fired those she did not like . The remaining employees began complaining to Selena about Saldívar , but Selena did not believe her friend would hurt her or her business . The employees then began to take their concerns to Quintanilla , Jr . , who warned Selena that Saldívar might be a dangerous person . Selena did not believe Saldívar would turn on her ; her father had a habit of distrusting people .

In January 1995 , Debra Ramirez , Selena 's cousin , was hired to work in the boutiques and to help

Selena expand the business into Mexico . Ramirez quit within a week , telling Saldívar she was dissatisfied with the failure of staff members to report sales . Ramirez also found receipts were missing from the sale of several boutique items . Saldívar told her to " mind [ her ] business " and that it was not her concern . Saldívar frequently clashed with Martin Gomez , Selena 's fashion designer , who complained that Saldívar was mismanaging Selena 's affairs . Their animosity intensified during Selena 's fashion shows ; Gomez accused Saldívar of mutilating or destroying some of his original creations and said she never paid bills . Gomez stated that Saldívar had " established a reign of terror " ; the two were constantly complaining about each other to Selena . Saldívar began recording their conversations without Gomez 's consent to persuade Selena he was not working for the boutiques ' best interests . Gomez was relegated to a supporting role when Selena decided to design her clothes herself . Between late 1994 and early 1995 , Saldívar often traveled to Monterrey , Mexico , to expedite the process of opening another Selena Etc. store . When Saldívar visited the factory in Mexico , she intimidated the seamstresses by telling them to either side with her or leave .

= = = Selena and Saldívar 's relationship = = =

Saldívar was receiving " tokens of affection from [ Selena ] " , which she was not accustomed to . Her room was covered with Selena posters and pictures , burning votive candles , and a library of Selena videos which she played to entertain guests . During an interview with Saldívar in 1995 , reporters from The Dallas Morning News said her devotion to Selena bordered on obsession . Saldívar told employees at Selena Etc. she wanted to " be like Selena " . According to an unnamed former employee , Saldívar was " possessive " of her relationship with Selena , and tried to distance Selena from the other employees . This person believed that Saldívar 's goal was to " have more control over [ the employees ] and over Selena " . Saldívar said her reason for distancing the employees from Selena was to " shield " the singer from the " petty issues " of managing her boutiques . Along with the responsibility of running the boutiques , Saldívar accompanied Selena on trips and had keys to the singer 's house .

When Saldívar became a business associate , their relationship began to deteriorate . In September 1994 , Selena met Ricardo Martinez , a doctor who lived in Monterrey , Mexico . Selena wanted to expand the number of boutiques by opening a Selena Etc. store in Monterrey . Martinez said he had contacts in Mexico who could help her grow her business . Martinez became a business adviser to Selena , though her family said he was simply a fan who posed in several pictures with her . Saldívar became envious of Selena 's dependency on Martinez . He began sending flowers to Selena 's hotel room . Saldívar warned the singer that Martinez might have unprofessional intentions . Selena began visiting Monterrey more frequently , often in disguise . Sebastian D 'Silva , Martinez 's assistant , would pick up Selena at the airport ; he said he noticed she was wearing wigs and using her husband Chris Pérez 's surname so others would not identify her . According to Martinez , he had lent several thousand dollars to Selena because she was short on cash .

= = = Saldívar 's termination of employment = = =

Starting in January 1995 , Quintanilla , Jr . , began receiving telephone calls and letters from angry fans who claimed to have paid their enrollment fees but had not received the promised memorabilia . Upon investigation , Quintanilla , Jr . , discovered Saldívar had embezzled more than \$ 60 @,@ 000 using forged checks from both the fan club and the boutiques . Saldívar 's brother , Armando Saldívar , supposedly contacted Gomez and " made up a story " that Saldívar was stealing money from the fan club . Gomez then contacted one of Selena 's uncles by telephone ; the uncle told Quintanilla , Jr . Armando said he was angry with Saldívar but did not want the reason to be made public ; later he said he felt guilty for starting the rumor . He appeared on the Spanish @-@ language television news program Primer Impacto but reporters found his comments illogical .

Quintanilla , Jr . , held a meeting on March 9 , 1995 , with Selena and Suzette Quintanilla at Q @-@ Productions to confront Saldívar . Quintanilla , Jr . , presented Saldívar with evidence concerning

the missing funds . He said Saldívar simply stared at him without answering any of his questions . Quintanilla , Jr . , told Saldívar he would involve police if she did not produce evidence that disproved his accusations . When Quintanilla , Jr. asked her why fans were not receiving the promised gift packages , Saldívar said those fans were trying to get the items for free . Quintanilla , Jr . , discovered Saldívar had opened the fan club 's bank account under her sister 's name , " Maria Elida " . When asked why she had done this , she replied that the bank would not allow her to open an account in her name ; she did not know the reason for this refusal . Saldívar abruptly left the meeting . Quintanilla , Jr . , then banned Saldívar from contacting Selena . However , Selena did not want to end their friendship ; she felt Saldívar was essential to the success of her clothing line in Mexico . Selena also wanted to keep Saldívar close because she had bank records , statements , and financial records necessary for tax purposes .

After the meeting , Quintanilla , Jr . , discovered the fan club 's checks were signed with Maria Elida 's signature in handwriting identical to Saldívar 's . He concluded that Saldívar was writing forged checks using her sister 's name then cashing them and keeping the funds . When Quintanilla , Jr . , was trying to retrieve the fan club 's bank statements , he said they had " vanished " . He found a letter in Saldívar 's handwriting stating that Maria Elida had to close the bank account because of a major problem . According to the letter , a member of the fan club , Yvonne Perales , was sent to the bank to deposit \$ 3 @, @ 000 but Perales did not deposit the money and could not be found . The letter stated that Maria Elida found out about the situation " too late " and that Perales and the money were missing . Maria Elida then wrote checks to be cashed by Saldívar , even though the bank account had no funds . The letter said Maria Elida was closing the account for that reason and that the bank would have to cover the checks . Quintanilla , Jr . , confronted Saldívar about Perales ' identity ; he said Saldívar knew nothing about her . Quintanilla , Jr . , said Saldívar did not trust the treasurer of the fan club but she had trusted a complete stranger to deposit \$ 3 @, @ 000 . He told Saldívar to " tell that lie to someone else " . He concluded that Perales did not exist , since none of the fan club workers had ever met her .

= = = Failed attempts to kill Selena = = =

The day after Saldívar was banned from contacting Selena , Quintanilla , Jr . , drove to Q @-@ Productions and chased her from the premises and told her she was no longer welcome there . The same day , Selena and Saldívar argued by telephone ; Selena hung up and told Pérez she could no longer trust Saldívar . According to Quintanilla , Jr . , there were four attempts to murder Selena . Selena removed Saldívar 's name from the boutique 's bank account on March 10 , 1995 ; she was replaced as fan club president by Irene Herrera . The next day , Saldívar purchased a gun at A Place to Shoot , a gun shop and shooting range in San Antonio . She bought a Taurus Model 85 snub @-@ nosed .38 @-@ caliber revolver and .38 caliber hollow @-@ point bullets ; the bullets were designed to cause more extensive injuries than normal bullets . Saldívar told the clerk she needed protection in her job as an in @-@ home nurse because a patient 's relatives had threatened her .

On March 13 , Saldívar went to her lawyer and wrote her resignation , which Quintanilla , Jr . , believed was her alibi . The same day , Saldívar drove to Corpus Christi and checked into the Sand and Sea Motel . Selena was in Miami , Florida , at the time . Quintanilla , Jr . , believed this would have been the first attempt to kill Selena . When Selena arrived in Corpus Christi on March 14 , Saldívar contacted her to schedule a meeting . Saldívar told Selena there was too much traffic and asked her to meet her at a parking lot twenty @-@ five miles away from Corpus Christi . Upon arriving , Selena told Saldívar she could remain in charge of her business affairs in Mexico . According to Quintanilla , Jr . , Selena wanted to continue employing Saldívar until she could find a replacement . Saldívar showed Selena the gun she had bought ; Selena told her to " get rid of it " and said she would protect Saldívar from her father , according to Saldívar and Pérez . This , Quintanilla , Jr . , believed , had calmed Saldívar and was the reason she did not kill Selena in the parking lot . The next day , Saldívar returned the gun to the shop saying her father had given her a .22 @-@ caliber pistol . On March 26 , Saldívar stole a perfume sample and more bank statements

from Selena in Mexico .

Saldívar accompanied Selena on a trip to Tennessee while the singer finished recording a song for her crossover album . Selena told Saldívar some bank statements were missing and asked her to return them as soon as they returned to Texas . Saldívar re @-@ purchased the gun on March 27 and asked Selena to meet her alone at a motel room ; this was her second attempt to kill Selena . News of Selena 's arrival spread and she was soon mobbed by fans . Quintanilla , Jr . , believed her fans saved her that day ; there were " too many witnesses " . According to him , the third attempt to kill Selena was during Saldívar 's trip to Monterrey in the last week of March . Dr. Martinez received telephone calls from Saldívar crying hysterically and saying she had been raped on March 29 . The next day , Saldívar again called Dr. Martinez , who said the calls sounded as though someone was trying to snatch the telephone away from Saldívar . He sent an employee to her motel room to investigate ; the employee found she had left a few minutes earlier .

On March 30 , Saldívar returned from her Monterrey trip and checked into a Days Inn motel . She contacted Selena and told her she had been raped . According to Quintanilla , Jr . , this was the last message they received from Saldívar ; he believed this claim was her new alibi . Saldívar asked Selena to visit her at her motel room alone , however , Perez accompanied her . According to Perez , he waited by his truck as Selena went alone to Saldívar 's motel room . As Perez was driving back to their house , Selena noticed Saldívar had failed to give her the correct bank statements she needed . Saldívar tried contacting Selena through her pager ; she desperately wanted Selena to take her to a hospital that night . She told Selena she was bleeding due to her rape . Quintanilla , Jr . , believed Saldívar was trying to get Selena to return to the motel alone . Pérez told Selena it was " too late " and did not want her to go out alone . Unbeknownst to Pérez , Selena agreed to meet Saldívar the next morning .

= = Murder = =

On March 30 , 1995 , Selena contacted Leonard Wong about the perfume samples he had made for her . According to Wong , Selena told him she would be meeting Saldívar the next morning to pick up the samples that had been stolen from her . The same day , she told another employee at the boutique she was expecting to fire Saldívar . At 7 : 30 a.m. ( CST ) March 31 , Selena rose from her bed , donned green workout sweats , and left for Saldívar 's motel room . At the motel , Saldívar told Selena she had been raped in Mexico . Selena took her to Doctors Regional Hospital , where medical staff noticed Saldívar showed symptoms of depression . Saldívar told a doctor she had bled " a little " . The doctor noticed Selena was angry at Saldívar and told her Saldívar said she had been bleeding copiously the day before . The doctor found no evidence of rape and told Saldívar she should go to San Antonio to get a gynecological examination . According to Texas rape case law , they were unable to perform the examination because Saldívar was a resident of San Antonio and the rape had occurred outside the country . While driving back to the motel , Selena told Saldívar it would be best if they stayed apart for a while to avoid upsetting Quintanilla , Jr . , . According to Dr. Martinez , Selena had tried to contact him that morning but he could not speak on the telephone because he was performing surgery . At 10 : 00 a.m. ( CST ) , Quintanilla , Jr . , contacted Pérez to determine the whereabouts of Selena ; she was due to record a song at Q @-@ Productions that morning and had not arrived . Pérez called Selena on her cellular telephone and reminded her of the scheduled recording . She told him she had forgotten the session and she was " taking care of one last [ item of ] business " and would be at Q @-@ Productions soon after . This was the last telephone call Selena answered and was the last time Pérez heard her voice .

At the motel room , Selena and Saldívar began arguing . Motel guests complained about loud noises coming from Saldívar 's room . They said they heard two women arguing about business matters . Selena told Saldívar she could no longer be trusted , and demanded Saldívar return her financial papers . Selena then dumped Saldívar 's satchel containing bank statements onto the bed and saw the gun . At 11 : 48 a.m. ( CST ) , Saldívar pointed it at Selena . As Selena tried to flee , Saldívar shot her once on the lower right shoulder , severing an artery and causing a massive loss of blood . Trinidad Espinoza , the hotel 's maintenance man , reported hearing a " loud bang " ,

which he likened to a car engine misfiring . Selena was critically wounded ; she ran towards the lobby , leaving a trail of blood 392 feet ( 119 m ) long . She was seen clutching her chest screaming , " Help me ! Help me ! I 've been shot ! " ; Saldívar was still chasing after her , pointing the gun at her , and calling her a " bitch " . According to Carlos Morales , who was waiting outside the motel , he heard screaming and saw Selena running towards him . She grabbed Morales and screamed , " they 'll shoot me again " . Selena collapsed on the floor at 11 : 49 a.m. ( CST ) as hotel General Manager , Barbara Schultz telephoned the emergency services . The singer identified Saldívar as her assailant and gave the number of the room where she had been shot . Shawna Vela and hotel sales manager Ruben DeLeon tried to stop the flow of blood . Selena 's condition began to deteriorate rapidly as motel staff attended to her . Selena screamed at the staff , telling them , " lock the door , she 'll shoot me again " . DeLeon tried to talk to Selena but noticed she was beginning to lose consciousness ; he said she was moaning and moving less often . DeLeon noticed Selena 's eyes had rolled back and that she went limp .

An ambulance arrived at the scene in one minute and 55 seconds . The paramedics tore away the green sweater where the bleeding was taking place and applied a Vaseline gauze to Selena 's wound , which stopped the surface bleeding . Selena 's heartbeat was now very slow ; a paramedic performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation to keep her blood circulating . Paramedic Richard Fredrickson said " it was too late " when he arrived in the lobby . He found a " thick [ pool of blood ] from her neck to her knees , all the way around on both sides [ of her body ] " . Fredrickson could not locate a pulse ; when he placed his fingers on her neck , he felt only muscle twitches .

A paramedic tried inserting an intravenous needle into Selena , but her veins had collapsed because of the massive blood loss and low ( or no ) blood pressure , making the insertion extremely difficult . Local police closed off Navigation Boulevard . When paramedics delivered Selena to Corpus Christi Memorial Hospital at 12 : 00 p.m. ( CST ) , her pupils were fixed and dilated , there was no evidence of neurological function , and she had no vital signs . Doctors were able to establish an " erratic heartbeat " long enough to transfer her to the trauma room . Doctors began blood transfusions in an attempt to re @-@ establish blood circulation after opening Selena 's chest and finding massive internal bleeding . Selena 's right lung was damaged , her collarbone was shattered , and her veins were emptied of blood . Doctors widened her chest opening , administered drugs into her heart , and applied pressure to her wounds . Dr. Louis Elkins said a " pencil @-@ size artery leading from the heart had been cut in two by the hollow @-@ point bullet " and that six units of blood from the transfusion had spilled out from her circulatory system . After 50 minutes the doctors realized the damage was irreparable . Selena Quintanilla @-@ Pérez was pronounced dead at 1 : 05 p.m. ( CST ) from blood loss and cardiac arrest .

= = = Standoff and post @-@ mortem examination = = =

After the shooting , Saldívar entered her red 1994 GMC pickup truck and tried to leave the motel parking lot . Motel employee Rosario Garza saw Saldívar leave her room with a wrapped towel . It was later thought she was going to Q @-@ Productions to shoot Quintanilla , Jr . , and others who were waiting for Selena . However , she was spotted by a responding police officer in a vehicle . The officer left his vehicle , drew his gun , and ordered Saldívar out of the truck . Saldívar did not comply ; she backed up and parked adjacent to two cars . Her truck was then blocked in by the police vehicle . Saldívar picked up the pistol , pointed it at her right temple , and threatened to commit suicide . A SWAT team and the FBI Crisis Negotiation Unit were brought in . Musicologist Himilce Novas later said the event was reminiscent of O.J. Simpson 's planned suicide 10 months earlier .

Larry Young and Isaac Valencia began negotiating with Saldívar . They ran a telephone line to their base of operations adjacent to Saldívar 's pickup truck as the standoff continued . Lead negotiator Young tried to establish a rapport with Saldívar and persuade her to give herself up . Valencia suggested the shooting was accidental ; Saldívar later changed her story , saying the " gun went off " by itself . She spoke to relatives in addition to speaking with police . Motel guests were ordered to remain in their rooms until police escorted them out .

During the third hour after the shooting , an autopsy was performed due to overwhelming media

interest . It revealed that the bullet had entered Selena 's lower back , passed through her chest cavity , severed the right subclavian artery , and exited her right upper chest . Doctors said that if the bullet had been only one millimeter higher or lower , the wound would have been less severe . Later that afternoon , police drained the gasoline from the gas tank of Saldívar 's car and turned on floodlights .

After the standoff entered its fourth hour , Valencia succeeded in getting Saldívar to confess that she had intended to shoot herself . Saldívar said when she placed the gun to her own head , Selena tried to tell her not to kill herself . When Selena opened the door to leave , Saldívar said she told her to close it . She also said the gun went off when Selena left . During the sixth hour , Saldívar agreed to give herself up , but when she saw a police officer pointing a rifle at her , she panicked , ran back to her truck , picked up the revolver , and pointed it at her head again . Saldívar surrendered after more than nine hours . By then , hundreds of Selena 's fans had gathered at the scene ; many wept as police took Saldívar away . A press conference was called within hours of Selena 's murder ; Saldívar had not yet been named in media reports . Assistant Police Chief Ken Bung and Quintanilla , Jr . , told the press the possible motive was Selena 's intention to terminate Saldívar 's employment ; Rudy Treviño , director of the Texas Talent Music Association , and sponsor of the Tejano Music Awards , declared that March 31 , 1995 would be known as " Black Friday " .

= = Impact = =

= = = Media response = = =

When radio station KEDA @-@ AM broke the news of Selena 's death , many people accused the staff of lying because the next day was April Fools ' Day . In San Antonio , major Spanish @-@ language radio stations including Tejano 107 , KXTN @-@ FM , KRIO @-@ FM and KEDA @-@ AM , began monitoring developments . All major U.S. networks interrupted their regular programming to break the news . The lead item on national television network evening news programs in Corpus Christi had been the end of the 1994 ? 95 Major League Baseball strike ; within thirty minutes of its announcement , Selena 's murder was the lead item on all television stations in South Texas . Her death was front @-@ page news in The New York Times for two days , and was featured prominently on BBC World News . News of the singer 's death reached Japan , where David Byrne first heard of the shooting . Univision and Telemundo were among the first national news stations to arrive at the crime scene . Carlos Lopez of KMIQ @-@ 105 @.@ 1 told the Corpus Christi Caller @-@ Times that " Tejano music is dead for at least today " and compared the reactions to Selena 's death to reactions to the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and called March 31 , 1995 , " Black Friday " . Radio stations in Texas began playing Selena 's music non @-@ stop and taking telephone calls from distressed fans .

News stands were swarmed by people looking for items concerning Selena . A line for the April 1 , 1995 , edition of the Corpus Christi Caller Times formed ; the company added 11 @,@ 000 copies to their print run and later printed 20 @,@ 000 more copies to meet continued demand for the paper . A People magazine issue was released several days after her murder . Its publishers believed interest would soon wane ; they released a commemorative issue within a week when it became apparent that interest was growing . The issue sold nearly a million copies , selling the entire first and second run within two weeks . It became a collector 's item ? a first in the history of People . Betty Cortina , editor of People , told Biography , " it was unheard of " for an issue to completely sell out . In the following months , the success of the Selena issue led the company to release People en Español aimed at the Hispanic market . This was followed by Newsweek en Espanol and Latina magazine .

Puerto Rican @-@ American actress Jennifer Lopez was cast to play Selena in the 1997 biopic film about her life ; this choice drew criticism because of Lopez ' ancestry . After the film 's release , fans changed their views on Lopez after seeing her performance in the movie . Lopez became famous after the film 's release .

Selena 's life and career were covered by a number of television programs , including The Oprah Winfrey Show , E ! True Hollywood Story , VH1 's Behind The Music , American Justice , Snapped , and Famous Crime Scene . Other networks including MTV , Investigation Discovery , The Biography Channel , and A & E Network have aired special programs about Selena , while Spanish @-@ language networks regularly show documentaries to commemorate the anniversary of her death . These Spanish @-@ language documentaries are among the most @-@ watched programs in the history of American television , and often score record ratings for networks . A documentary titled Selena , A Star is Dimmed ? one of the first about her ? was broadcast on Univision 's Primer Impacto on 4 April 1995 ; it was watched by 2 @. @ 09 million people and became the second @-@ most @-@ viewed Spanish @-@ language show in the history of American television at the time . Networks competed with each other to interview Saldívar about the shooting . When news that Arrarás was able to interview her broke , Univision was inundated with requests to use the interview from major networks as far away as Germany . The interview on Primer Impacto was watched by 4 @. @ 5 million viewers ; it was the most @-@ watched program that night according to the Nielsen ratings , and became one of the most @-@ watched Spanish @-@ language programs in American television history .

= = = Hispanic community = = =

The news of Selena 's death deeply affected the Hispanic community ; many people traveled thousands of miles to visit Selena 's house , boutiques , and the crime scene . By mid @-@ afternoon , police were asked to form a detour as a line of automobiles began backing up traffic from the Quintanillas ' house . On the street where Selena had lived , gang graffiti and cacti distinguished the blue @-@ collar community from other subdivisions across America . A chain @-@ link fence in front of Selena 's house became a shrine festooned with mementoes as fans from across America left messages to Selena and the Quintanilla family . Most car drivers in Corpus Christi , and those driving cars on Interstate 37 from Mexico , turned their headlights on in her memory . Fans scribbled notes and messages , and placed them on the door and doorstep of the room in which Selena had been shot .

Soon after learning of Selena 's death , people began speculating about the identity of her murderer . Some fans thought Emilio Navaira 's wife had shot Selena ; they believed she was jealous of Selena and Navaira 's relationship . Johnny Pasillas , Emilio 's brother @-@ in @-@ law and manager , frantically called radio stations in an attempt to quash the rumor . Among the celebrities who believed the rumor were record producer Manny Guerra , Pete Rodriguez , and American singer Ramon Hernandez . According to anchorwoman Arrarás , Selena 's death became " the most important news [ story ] of the year for Hispanics " . Texas Monthly editor Pamela Colloff wrote that reactions to her death were equivalent to those following a political assassination . Reactions were compared to those that followed the deaths of John Lennon , Elvis Presley , and John F. Kennedy .

Selena had a " cult @-@ like " following among Hispanics ; after her death she became a household name in the United States and a part of the American pop culture . She was more popular after her death than when she was alive . Selena became a cultural icon for Latinos and was seen as " a woman who was proud of her roots [ who had ] achieved her dreams " . According to Antonio Lopez of the Santa Fe New Mexican , the day Selena was killed " is a bookmark in time in the memories of many Latinos " . According to Arrarás , " women imitated her , men worshiped her " . In the aftermath of Selena 's murder , two linked deaths in California were reported . A drag queen planned to dress as Selena for a performance ; he was hit by a car and left to die . Actor Gloria de la Cruz auditioned for the role of Selena ; her body was later found in a dumpster in Los Angeles . Her killer had strangled her and set her body on fire .

= = = Celebrities ' and politicians ' reactions = = =

Spanish singer Julio Iglesias interrupted a recording session in Miami for a moment of silence . Among the celebrities who contacted the Quintanilla family following the news were Gloria Estefan ,



Celia Cruz , Iglesias , and Madonna . Concerts throughout Texas were canceled ; La Mafia canceled their concert in Guatemala and flew back to Texas . Tejano singer Ramiro Herrera and dozens of other Tejano artists also canceled their concerts . Ben Benavidez , radio personality and owner of Tejano Review , told Corpus Christi Caller Times that March 31 would be remembered as " the worst day in Corpus Christi history " . American singer @-@ songwriter Rhett Lawrence published an advertisement in Billboard magazine 's 22 April 1995 issue ; it said , " music I heard with you was more than music . You will be deeply missed . " Other celebrities interviewed on radio stations , including Stefanie Ridel , Jaime DeAnda ( of Los Chamacos ) , Elsa Garcia , and Shelly Lares , expressed their thoughts about Selena 's death . Talk show host Oprah Winfrey called Selena 's life " short but significant " during a March 1997 episode of The Oprah Winfrey Show . American singer @-@ songwriter Mariah Carey told MTV Selena 's death was shocking to her because of " the way it had happened so abruptly in a young life " . State senator Carlos Truan and state representative Solomon P. Ortiz reportedly mourned Selena 's death . American music industry executive Daniel Glass told Texas Monthly he believed Selena would have enjoyed greater career success had it not been for her death . A few days after her death , president of the United States Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary sent a letter of condolence to Selena 's husband Chris Pérez .

A few days later , Howard Stern mocked Selena 's murder , burial , and mourners , and criticized her music . Stern said , " This music does absolutely nothing for me . Alvin and the Chipmunks have more soul ... Spanish people have the worst taste in music . They have no depth . " He then played Selena 's songs with gunshot noises in the background . Stern 's comments and actions outraged and infuriated the Hispanic community in Texas . After an arrest warrant for disorderly conduct was issued for him , Stern made an on @-@ air statement , in Spanish , saying his comments were not made to cause " more anguish to her family , friends and those who loved her " . The League of United Latin American Citizens found Stern 's apology unacceptable and urged a boycott of his show . Texas retailers removed products related to Stern . Sears and McDonalds sent a letter expressing their disapproval of Stern 's comments to the media because fans believed they sponsored his show . Within a week , on NBC 's The Tonight Show with Jay Leno , Stern and his co @-@ host Robin Quivers were asked if Stern 's remarks about Selena were acceptable . Quivers decided not to talk about the situation to avoid arguing with Stern . When Linda Ronstadt , a pop singer of Mexican @-@ American heritage , appeared on the show , she and Quivers argued when Ronstadt defended Selena .

= = = Other reactions = = =

On April 12 , 1995 , two weeks after Selena 's death , Texas governor George W. Bush declared her birthday Selena Day in Texas . Bush said Selena represented " the essence of south Texas culture " . On Selena Day , approximately a thousand fans gathered at her grave and began singing traditional Mexican folk songs ; police were brought in to control the crowd . On the same day , a crowd of three thousand attended an organized mass of the resurrection for Selena at Johnnyland Concert Park .

In April and May that year , some European @-@ Americans in Texas wrote to the editor of the Brazosport Facts questioning the fuss over her death ; some were offended because Selena Day coincided with Easter Sunday . Others said , " Easter is more important than Selena Day " , and believed people should let Selena rest in peace and get on with their lives . Mexican @-@ Americans living in Texas also wrote to the newspaper ; some agreed that others were too critical of Selena Day , stating they did not need to celebrate the day and should not have responded to its announcement so rudely . This was also seen by the Corpus Christi Caller Times , which said it had printed several of the negative comments left by people and that many comments were " unprintable " . Hispanic filmmaker Lourdes Portillo said she did not know who Selena was when she heard about the shooting .

When the news of Selena 's death broke , some Americans asked who she was and said she was " not that important " , suggesting Hispanics " get over it " . Author and Texas Monthly magazine contributor Joe Nick Patoski said Anglo @-@ Americans and Mexican @-@ Americans were

divided in their reactions to Selena 's death . Patoski said that Anglo @-@ Americans " didn 't understand what all the fuss was about " . This was echoed in the Corpus Christi Caller Times , where they found racial divisions in the reactions to Selena 's death . Educators who had observed the reactions said , " the emergence of an icon in a minority culture can be both bewildering and threatening to Anglos " . Melicent Rothschild said some Americans often do not understand " the cultural role models of groups who have felt discriminated against " . Following Selena 's death , cultural confrontations were reported. some vocally opposed any memorials to the singer , feeling they would be costed to taxpayers . Others complained to newspapers about the media interest in Selena 's death . Many media outlets received negative comments from people around the country. some were baffled that the Rossler massacre , which occurred around the same time of Selena 's death , did not generate the same amount of media exposure . Mayor Mary Rhodes said many of the people complaining about the media exposure Selena was receiving had never heard of her .

In the 1997 biopic film about Selena , a store manager asks Hispanics running towards the singer for an autograph , " Who 's Selena ? " . Americans felt the scene was " irrelevant " and " over dramatized " . One Selena fan said the event depicted in the scene " happens all the time " to Hispanics and their friends , and that they feel their community has been " ignored " . Lauraine Miller said , " Selena has opened my eyes " , and that Miller had become " more American " . Another fan said , " nobody ever lets you forget you are Mexican American " in the U.S.

= = Music industry = = =

At the time of Selena 's death , 52 % of all Latin music sales were generated by regional Mexican music ; most of this was Tejano , which had become one of the most popular Latin music genres . Selena 's music led the genre 's 1990s revival and made it marketable for the first time . Many media outlets described her as the " Queen of Tejano music " . Major record companies including EMI Records , SBK Records , Warner Music Group , CBS Records , and Sony Music began signing Tejano artists to compete in the Latin music market . Following Selena 's death , the Tejano music market suffered and its popularity waned . Radio stations in the United States that played Tejano music switched to regional Mexican music , and by 1997 , KQQK was the only radio station playing non @-@ stop Tejano music . By the mid @-@ 2000s , radio stations in the United States no longer played Tejano music , large auditoria stopped hosting Tejano artists by 2007 , and major record companies abandoned their Tejano artists after 1995 . Selena remains the best @-@ selling Tejano artist of all time , and continues to outsell living Tejano artists . She remains the only Tejano musician whose recordings continue to chart on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart . After her death , Tejano music was replaced with Latin pop as the most popular Latin music genre in the United States .

Within hours of Selena 's murder , record stores sold out of her albums ; EMI Latin began pressing several million CDs and cassettes to meet the expected demand . Gloria Ballesteros , a sales representative of Southwestern Wholesalers in San Antonio , told Billboard their inventory of 5 @,@ 000 copies of Selena albums was sold out by the afternoon of her death . Record stores ordering more copies of her recordings were told by EMI Latin representatives they would not be able to restock for a few days . EMI Latin shipped 500 @,@ 000 units of Selena 's recordings to stores in the two weeks following her death . Her song " Fotos y Recuerdos " was number four on the US Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart the day she was killed ; it peaked at number one on April 15 , 1995 . Selena 's singles " No Me Queda Mas " , " Bidi Bidi Bom Bom " , " Como la Flor " , and " Amor Prohibido " , re @-@ entered the Hot Latin Tracks and the Regional Mexican Airplay chart in the issue of Billboard magazine dated April 15 , 1995 . Selena 's 1994 album Amor Prohibido re @-@ entered the Billboard 200 chart at number 92 , representing a 520 percent increase in sales . 12 @,@ 040 units sold the week Selena was murdered . The following week , the album rose to number 32 with 28 @,@ 238 units sold representing a 135 percent increase . Amor Prohibido , which was positioned at number four on March 31 , peaked at number one on the Top Latin Albums chart in the issue dated April 15 , 1995 . Three albums , Entre a Mi Mundo ( 1992 ) , Live ! ( 1993 ) , and 12 Super Exitos ( 1994 ) , re @-@ entered the Top Latin Albums chart , while Selena 's albums

took chart positions one to four on the Regional Mexican Albums chart that same week . Her albums sparked a buying frenzy for Latin music in Japan , Germany , and China .

Dreaming of You , the crossover album Selena was working on at the time of her death , was released in July 1995 . On the day of its release , 175 @,@ 000 copies were sold in the U.S. ? a record for a female vocalist ? and 331 @,@ 000 copies sold in its first week . Selena became the third female artist after Janet Jackson and Mariah Carey to sell over 300 @,@ 000 units in one week . It debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart , becoming the first album by a Hispanic artist to do so . Dreaming of You was the first posthumous album by a solo artist to debut at number one . The recording was among the top ten best @-@ selling debuts for a musician , and was the best @-@ selling debut by a female act . Dreaming of You joined five of Selena 's studio albums on the Billboard 200 chart simultaneously , making her the first female artist in Billboard history to accomplish this feat . The Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) certified it 35x platinum for shipping more than 3 @.@ 5 million copies in the U.S. As of 2015 , the recording has sold five million copies worldwide , becoming the best @-@ selling Latin album of all @-@ time in the United States . Five of Selena 's albums generated \$ 4 million in sales within five years . Selena was inducted into the Billboard Latin Music Hall of Fame , the Hard Rock Cafe 's Hall of Fame in 1995 , the South Texas Music Hall of Fame , and the Tejano Music Hall of Fame in 2001 . In December 1999 , she was named the " top Latin artist of the ' 90s " and " best @-@ selling Latin artist of the decade " by Billboard for her fourteen top @-@ ten singles ? including seven number @-@ one hits ? in the Top Latin Songs chart .

= = Funeral and tributes = =

On the day Selena was killed , vigils and memorials were held throughout Texas and California . Radio station Tejano 107 sponsored a candlelight vigil at the Sunken Gardens , while KRIO @-@ FM sponsored another at South Park Mall on March 31 which was attended by 5 @,@ 000 people . Radio stations in Texas played her music non @-@ stop . On April 1 , Bayfront Plaza in Corpus Christi held a vigil which drew 3 @,@ 000 fans . During the event , it was announced that a public viewing of the casket would be held at the Bayfront Auditorium the following day . Fans lined up for almost a mile . An hour before the doors opened , rumors that the casket was empty began circulating , which prompted the Quintanilla family to have an open @-@ casket viewing . About 30 @,@ 000 to 40 @,@ 000 fans passed by Selena 's casket . More than 78 @,@ 000 signed a book of condolence . Flowers for the casket viewing were imported from The Netherlands . At the request of Selena 's family , video and flash photography was banned . The same day , an unannounced bilingual Sunday morning mass for Selena featuring a mariachi choir was held at the San Fernando Cathedral in downtown San Antonio . In the United States , churches with a high proportion of Hispanic worshippers held prayers for Selena . A reporter noticed that many " mythic symbols " such as the Christian symbols of angels , saints , healers , and saviors , were " attached to Selena " by fans . There was a tribute for the singer during a St. Patrick 's Day celebration in a Catholic church in Houston , Texas . Priest Father Sal DeGeorge decided to hold a tribute to Selena that day after people ? especially children ? asked him what was being planned for the singer . That same day , a disc jockey played Selena 's music near the church in a small park .

On April 3 , 1995 , six hundred guests ? mostly family members ? attended Selena 's burial at Seaside Memorial Park , which was broadcast live by a Corpus Christi and San Antonio radio station without the consent of her family . A Jehovah 's Witness minister from Lake Jackson preached in English , quoting Paul the Apostle 's words in 1 Corinthians 15 . Hundreds of people began circling the area in their vehicles . Among the celebrities who attended the funeral were Roberto Pulido , Bobby Pulido , David Lee Garza , Navaira , Laura Canales , Elsa Garcia , La Mafia , Ram Herrera , Imagen Latina , and Astudillo . A special mass held the same day at Los Angeles Sports Arena drew a crowd of 4 @,@ 000 . Selena had been booked to play there that night for her Amor Prohibido Tour . The promoter charged an admission fee , which upset Quintanilla , Jr . Modesto Lopez Portillo drove from El Salvador to Los Angeles to be the officiating priest for the gathering ; the consul general of El Salvador attended as well . In Lake Jackson , a thousand fans and friends of Selena

gathered at the municipal park in neighboring Clute , where she had played at the Mosquito Festival in July 1994 . The next day , Our Lady of the Pillar , a church in Spain , held a mass for Selena which drew 450 people to the 225 @-@ seat church . In the weeks following her death , cars throughout Texas were seen with pictures of Selena painted on them . On April 28 , during a fireworks display for Buccaneer Days in Corpus Christi , the music was reworked to include " Bidi Bidi Bom Bom " in her memory . Selena Etc. boutiques became shrines to the singer as fans left balloons , flowers , pictures , and poems . Street murals of Selena were found across Texas after her death . In the months following Selena 's death , an average of 12 @,@ 000 people visited her grave site and the Days Inn motel where the shooting occurred . The motel 's manager rearranged its room numbers so guests would not know in which room Selena had been shot . The singer became part of the Day of the dead celebration . In 1997 , Selena was commemorated with a museum and a life @-@ sized bronze statue , Mirador de la Flor , in Corpus Christi , which are visited by hundreds of fans each week . Fans flocked to her statue and murals , seeing them as a symbols of self @-@ identity , unionism , religious expression , resistance , self @-@ expression , equality , liberation , passion , optimism , possibility , and " encouragement and hope to the poor " .

Musicians used music to express their thoughts about Selena or recorded compositions as tributes to her . These included American country artist Tony Joe White , Haitian singer @-@ songwriter Wyclef Jean , American Tejano artist Pete Astudillo , Puerto Rican American group the Barrio Boyzz , Mexican American singer Graciela Beltran , American Tejano artist Jennifer Pena , American hip @-@ hop singer Lil Ray , American Tejano artists Emilio Navaria , Bobby Pulido , Cuban salsa singer Celia Cruz , Dominican salsa singer José Alberto " El Canario " , Puerto Rican American salsa singers Ray Sepulveda , Michael Stuart , Manny Manuel , Puerto Rican American jazz singer Hilton Ruiz , American singer Jenni Rivera , Mexican singer Lupillo Rivera , Venezuelan rock singer Mikel Erentxun , Puerto Rican American singer Tony Garcia , and American rapper King L.

Selena 's family and her former band Los Dinos held a tribute concert a week after the 10th anniversary of her murder on April 7 , 2005 . The concert , titled Selena ¡ VIVE ! , was broadcast live on Univision and achieved a 35 @.@ 9 household rating . It was the highest @-@ rated and most @-@ viewed Spanish @-@ language television special in the history of American television . It was the most @-@ watched program ? regardless of language ? among adults ages 18 to 34 in Los Angeles , Chicago , and San Francisco ; it tied for first in New York , beating that night 's episode of Fox 's American Idol . Among Hispanic viewers , figures for Selena ¡ VIVE ! exceeded those for Super Bowl XLV between the Packers and the Steelers and the telenovela Soy Tu Dueña , during what was the " most @-@ watched NFL season ever among Hispanics " .

In January 2015 , it was announced that a two @-@ day annual event called Fiesta de la Flor would be held in Corpus Christi by the Corpus Christi Visitors Bureau as a tribute to Selena . Musical acts for the first annual event included Kumbia All @-@ Starz , Chris Pérez , Los Lobos , Jay Perez , Little Joe y la Familia , Los Palominos , Stefani Montiel of Las 3 Divas , Girl in a Coma 's Nina Diaz , Las Fenix , and The Voice competitor Clarissa Serna . The event raised \$ 13 million and was attended by 52 @,@ 000 people , 72 % of whom lived outside Corpus Christi . The event sparked interest from people in thirty @-@ five U.S. states and five countries including Mexico , Brazil , and Ecuador .

= = Trial = =

Within twenty minutes of Saldívar 's surrender , she was taken to the downtown police station in Corpus Christi and placed in an interrogation room with investigators Paul and Ray Rivera . Paul Rivera , who had investigated homicides since 1978 , informed Saldívar of her right to an attorney , which she waived . When police investigators surrounded Saldívar 's truck , she had cried out , " I can 't believe I killed my best friend " . Within hours , she was saying the shooting was accidental . Saldívar 's bail bond was initially set at \$ 100 @,@ 000 , but District Attorney Carlos Valdez persuaded the presiding judge to raise it to \$ 500 @,@ 000 . When bail was announced , fans asked why the death penalty had not been sought . The Nueces County jail was deluged with death threats and there were public calls for vigilante justice . Some gang members in Texas were

reported to have taken up collections to raise the bond for Saldívar so they could kill her when she was released . In prison , she faced more death threats from inmates . The Mexican Mafia , a dominant gang in the Texas penal system , reportedly placed a price on her head and spread the word that anyone who committed the crime would be a hero .

Saldívar 's crime was punishable by up to ninety @-@ nine years in prison and a \$ 10 @,@ 000 fine . Saldívar was kept at Nueces County Jail under a suicide watch before her trial . The state had difficulty arranging defense counsel for Saldívar ; a spokesperson said any lawyer defending Saldívar could face death threats . She was assigned attorney Douglas Tinker , paid for by the people of Texas . Tinker 's wife feared they would suffer from community retribution and asked him not to take the case . Tinker chose Arnold Garcia , a former district prosecutor , as his legal counsel . Valdez , who lived a few blocks away from the Quintanilla family , chose Mark Skurka as his legal counsel . Mike Westergren presided over the case , which was moved to the Harris County Courthouse in Houston , Texas , to ensure an impartial jury . According to the Chicago Tribune , the Selena murder trial 's publicity " rivaled that of the O.J. Simpson proceedings " . Westergren ordered that the trial would not be televised or taped , and limited the number of reporters in the courtroom to avoid a " repeat of the Simpson circus " . The Chicago Tribune reported the division of interest in the trial between Hispanics and white Americans . Donna Dickerson , a white American magazine publisher , told the Chicago Tribune she had no interest in the trial because of Selena 's " Hispanic background " , and said Mexican @-@ Americans had not shown the same enthusiasm when Elvis Presley was found dead . The Selena murder trial was called the " trial of the century " and the most important trial to the Hispanic population . The trial generated interest in Europe , South America , Australia , and Japan .

Saldívar pleaded not guilty , saying the shooting was accidental . In his opening statement , Valdez said he believed Saldívar " deliberately killed Selena " . Valdez also called it a " senseless and cowardly " act because Selena was shot in the back . Tinker said the shooting was accidental and denied rumors Saldívar wanted to be romantically involved with Selena . On October 23 , 1995 , the jury deliberated for two hours before finding Saldívar guilty of murder . She received the maximum sentence of life in prison with no eligibility of parole for 30 years . On November 22 , 1995 , she arrived at the Gatesville Unit ? now the Christina Crain Unit ? in Gatesville , Texas , for processing . As of 2015 , Saldívar is serving her sentence in Gatesville at the Mountain View Unit , which is operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice . She will be eligible for parole on March 30 , 2025 . Because of multiple internal death threats from incarcerated Selena fans , Saldívar was placed in isolation and spends twenty @-@ three hours a day alone in her 9 by 6 feet ( 2 @.@ 7 by 1 @.@ 8 m ) cell .