



Southwestern Writers Collection

Special Collections at the Alkek Library
Texas State University-San Marcos

A Guide to the Severo Perez Papers

1972-2010 (Bulk dates: 1980-2010)

Collection 115

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Severo Perez
Title:	The Severo Perez Papers
Dates:	1972-2010 (Bulk dates: 1980-2010)
Abstract:	The papers of filmmaker and writer Severo Perez span 1972-2010 and document his career in film and television, and as a writer. The collection is arranged into six series: 1) Film; 2) Television; 3) Plays; 4) Books; 5) The National Endowment for the Humanities; and 6) Audio and Video Materials.
Identification:	Collection 115
Extent:	44 boxes (22 linear feet)
Language:	English, Spanish
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Biographical Sketch

Born in San Antonio, Texas in 1941, acclaimed filmmaker Severo Perez earned his B.A. in American Literature and Contemporary History from the University of Texas. Perez moved to Los Angeles in 1972 to pursue a career in the motion picture industry. His productions have won more than 50 awards, including three CINE Golden Eagles. Perez is also an accomplished playwright and novelist.

Perez began working in theater in 1974, teaming up with legendary actress Carmen Zapata to translate and adapt the Mexican play *Los desarraigados (Uprooted)* for American audiences. Later, Perez became playwright-in-residence at El Teatro Campesino, where he wrote *Soldierboy* with his wife, Judith Perez. That play is based on Perez's own personal story in San Antonio as the son of a returning U.S. soldier after World War II. *Soldierboy* has been staged around the country and appears in the 1989 anthology *Necessary Theater: Six Plays About the Chicano Experience*. Perez's credits as a dramatist also include *Speaking of Cats*, inspired by Tejana activist Emma Tenayuca and the 1938 pecan shellers strike in San Antonio. Perez's 1995 film, *...and the earth did not swallow him*, is adapted from Tomás Rivera's classic 1971 Chicano novel, *...y no se lo tragó la tierra*, and follows the lives of a South Texas family of migrant farmworkers in the 1950s. Perez's nuanced, powerful film beautifully evokes the substance and spirit of Rivera's work, and it has won international critical acclaim, including top honors at film festivals worldwide. Some of these honors include Sol Award CineSol at the 1995 Latino Film Festival, Best Feature Awards at both San Diego Independent Film Festival in 1994 and the Minneapolis Rivertown Film Festival in 1995.

In 1998, Perez finished a documentary about a remarkable woman—a pioneering African American pilot who took to the air in the 1930s and defied Jim Crow laws. The resulting film, *Willa Brown: An American Aviator*, was a success.

Perez's other films include a documentary on artist Carmen Lomas Garza, a feature film on Tejano hero Juan Seguin, and an adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. He has created documentaries on a wide range of subjects, including La Raza Unida's 1960s political uprising in Crystal City, Texas. He also negotiated the deal at Universal Studios that allowed Luiz Valdez to direct the film version of *Zoot Suit*.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of filmmaker and writer Severo Perez span 1972-2010 and document his career in film and television, and as a writer. The collection is arranged into six series: 1) Film; 2) Television; 3) Plays; 4) Books; 5) The National Endowment for the Humanities; and 6) Audio and Video Materials.

The bulk of the collection relates to Perez's film work, and includes the complete production archive for his 1995 film, *...and the earth did not swallow him*, an adaptation of Tomás Rivera's 1971 novel. The material relating to *...and the earth did not swallow him* is arranged into a number of subseries including screenplays, scripts, research, art, casting, production materials, photographs (location and continuity), financial and legal materials, post production, publicity, and film festivals.

Other films represented in the Perez Papers are *Elders* by Judith Perez, *Yolanda's Story*, *Willa Brown*, *Plaza de la Raza*, and *Carmen + Cesar*. Of these, *Willa Brown*, Perez' documentary about African American aviator, is the best represented with screenplays, production materials, and publicity files.

The series, Television, includes various scripts, proposals, correspondence, and production materials relating to his work in that field. Plays includes drafts of scripts for *Soldier Boy* and *Speak Only of Cats*. The series Books relates to Perez's novel about pioneering African American aviators and is comprised of multiple drafts representing all stages of the writing of the book. Perez submitted several proposals to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and these are represented in the fifth series of his collection.

The final series, Audio and Video materials, is extensive and includes film reels and prints for *...and the earth did not swallow him* as well as many of his other film projects. A complete list of these items can be provided upon request.

Mr. Perez donated his archive to the Wittliff Collections in 2014.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Preferred Citation

The Severo Perez Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Acquisition Information

Donated by Severo Perez, 2014

Processing Information

Processed by Russell Hill, August 2015

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Films

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Screenplay, 1989-1991

1	1	Draft August 1989
1	2	Draft (partial), Aug 1989
1	3	Draft, August 1989
1	4	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	5	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	6	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	7	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	8	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	9	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	10	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
1	11	Draft, December 1989 2 nd Draft
2	1	Draft, January 1990 2 nd Draft
2	2	Draft, January 1990 2 nd Draft
2	3	Draft, February 1990 2 nd Draft
2	4	Draft, February 1990 2 nd Draft
2	5	Draft, February 1990 2 nd Draft
2	6	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
2	7	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
2	8	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
2	9	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
2	10	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
3	1	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
3	2	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
3	3	Draft, March 1990 2 nd Draft
3	4	Draft, February 1991
3	5	Draft, March 1991
3	6	Draft, March 1991
3	7	Draft, March 1991
3	8	Draft, March 1991 plus one page from article in <i>Hispanic Link Weekly Report</i> from May 15, 1989
3	9	Draft, April 1991, plus outline
3	10	Draft, April 1991

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Screenplay, continued

4	1	Draft, April 1991
4	2	Draft, April 1991
4	3	Draft, April 1991
4	4	Draft, July 1, 1991 rewrite
4	5	Draft, July 1991 American Playhouse rewrite
4	6	Drafts, September 1991
4	7	Drafts, September 1991 American Playhouse rewrite
4	8	Draft, undated
4	9	Draft, undated
5	1	Draft, undated
5	2	Draft, undated
5	3	Draft, undated
5	4	Draft, undated
5	5	Draft, undated
5	6	Draft, partial, undated
5	7	Draft, edits by Judy Perez, undated
5	8	Comments on screenplay by Julian Olivares, September 11, 1989
5	9	Notes by Antonio Castañeda, September 15, 1989
5	10	Comments and notes on screenplay drafts, September 1989
5	11	Notes for rewrite, undated

Scripts, 1990-1991

6	1	Working version before production, July 18, 1991
6	2	Working version before production, August 1991
6	3	Working version before production
6	4	Working version before production
6	5	Working version before production, plus Adair and Armstrong script
7	1	Script and supervisor's notes
7	2	Shooting script, December 1990
7	3	Shooting script, December 1990 American Playhouse rewrite
7	4	"Shooting script Tierra Productions" with Severo's notes
7	5	"Lined script-Orig." with original Script Supervisor's notes
7	6	Narrator's Script
7	7	Draft of final script

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Production , 1989-1994

Research, 1989-1991

8	1	Iowa Film Office Information Book
8	2	Iowa Maps – Local Information
8	3	Texas Maps – Local Information
8	4	Samples of period clothing & shooting location
8	5	Black and White photos from Russell Lee Collection
8	6	National Geographic (January 1991) and Texas Journal (Fall/Winter 1989)

Art

8	7	Storyboards – 8 1/2 x 11 Master
8	8	Storyboards
8	9	Storyboards
8	10	Stage Plan Blueprints
8	11	Outline and Drawing Instructions
8	12	Sketches by Cesar Martinez

Casting

8	13	Casting Photos and Bios
8	14	Resume for Antonio Ogaz
8	15	Ernesto Salcedo, Musician/Composer resume and demo audiocassette
8	16	Marcos Loya Photo and Bio

Production Materials, 1990-1994

9	1	Call Sheets
9	2	Shooting Schedule
9	3	Shooting Locations – South Texas
9	4	Tierra Production Schedule
9	5	Production Schedule, July 6, 1992
9	6	Tierra Locations/Breakdown
9	7	Production Binder
9	8	Production Binder
9	9	Production Binder – Location Scouting, Casting List, Letters, Calendar, and Script
9	10	Production Binder – Online Schedules, Press Releases, Letters, Photos

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Production

Production Materials, continued

9	11	“Code Book” for every Scene and Reel
9	12	Handwritten notes, one page
10	1	Tierra Scholars Meeting
10	2	Transcript of the Tierra Advisory Meeting, Feb 24, 1990
10	3	Tierra Productions Script with notes by Perez while shooting
10	4	Tierra Newsletter and other material
10	5	Narrator’s Script, Oonline Schedule, and Crew List
10	6	Narrator’s Script, End Credits
10	7	Prairie House Motel Brochure
11	1	Spanish Subtitles Draft July 29, 1994
11	2	Spanish Subtitles List August 15, 1994
11	3	Severo’s outline for making <i>...and the Earth did not swallow him...</i>
11	4	Various production materials, correspondence, notes
11	5	Scene List
11	6	Domestic Distribution - Television
<h4>Location Scouting Photographs</h4>		
12	1	Crystal City by Severo Perez
12	2	Crystal City
12	3	Crystal City
12	4	Minnesota and Iowa – photos by Severo Perez
12	5	SC 27 Sunrise Hwy in Midwest
12	6-7	Location Scouting Photos
13	1	Cologne Catholic School, Rectory, & Cemetery”
13	2	Cologne, Methodist Cemetery
13	3	“Tomas Rivera’s Actual House” (Photo with Tomas Rivera’s brother, Henry)
13	4	“Tomas Rivera’s Zoo Island”
13	5	Duncan, Iowa Field, Zoo Island
13	6	Don Cleto Int.
13	7	Don Cleto Ext.
13	8	Cemetery – Duncan, Iowa

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Production

Location Scouting Photographs, continued

13	9	Iowa Cemetery
13	10	Crystal City Cemetery
13	11	“Ford Truck found near Sacramento”
13	12-18	Location Photos
14	1	Misc. Store Fronts, Rectories, etc. Drive-bys
14	2	San Antonio Locations
14	3	SC 15 + Salon Hidalgo
14	4	SC 16 + Cotton Field
14	5	SC 87 + Trailer/Carpenter Train
14	6	SC 128 Power Plant
14	7	Potato + Carrot Farm, Midwest Farms, Clearance Iowa
14	8	Midwest School
14	9	Haxton House California
14	10	Chicken Coops – Garner, Iowa
14	11	Iowa Farm, Garner
14	12	Sugar Beet Field – Renfield Co. Minn
14	13	Minn. Roadside Attractions, Barns, etc.
14	14	Jordan, Minn.
14	15	Small Schools, Minnesota
14	16	Crystal City Locals, Creeks & Rivers
14	17	Iowa – Potato – Muddy Field

Continuity Photos

15	1	Day 1
15	2	Day 2
15	3	Day 3
15	4	Day 4
15	5	Day 5
15	6	Day 6
16	1	Day 7
16	2	Day 8
16	3	Day 9
16	4	Day 10

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Production

Location Scouting Photographs, continued

16 5 Day 11
16 6 Day 12
16 7 Day 13

17 1 Day 15
17 2 Day 16
17 3 Day 9-2-92
17 4 Day 20
17 5 Day 21
17 6 Day 22
17 7 Day 23
17 8 Day 24
17 9 Day 25

18 1 Day 27
18 2 Assorted Days
18 3 Piru Party Dance
18 4 Undated
18 5 Set Shots

Photographs from the Film, Various Photos

18 6 Photographs from the Film, photos and negatives
18 7 Various photos
18 8 Various photos and negatives

19 1 Photographs during filming
19 2 Color negatives, Photos by Carlos Rene Perez
19 3 Production stills photography (1 of 2)
19 4 Production stills photography (2 of 2)
19 5 Photographs, Perez and others
19 6 Photographs – Black and White 8 x 10s
19 7 Photograph of Crystal City and Carrizu Springs; pen drawing of three men

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Production, Continued

Financial Materials

20	1	Budget Sheets
20	2	“Old Tierra Budgets”
20	3	Tierra Revised Production Budget
20	4	Tierra Reimbursement Receipts
20	5	Production Manager Budget
20	6	Travel/Meals/Per Diem
20	7	Art Department Budget
20	8	Production Binder used by Perez to track budget while shooting
20	9	Budgets
20	10	Receipts and Invoices

Legal Materials

20	11	Legal documents/contracts
20	12	Film rental contract
20	13	Screen Actors Guild documents
20	14	Screen Actors Guild information
20	15	“Agreement with Concha Rivera”
20	16	San Diego State University agreements
20	17	Moscow International Film Festival documents/agreement

National Endowment for the Humanities

21	1	“Tierra Proposal –NEH”
21	2	“Tierra Reviews NEH Proposal”
21	3	“Working Draft – NEH Proposal”
21	4	NEH Grant documents & application
21	5	NEH application, budgets, Panelist evaluation sheets
21	6	NEH Panelist evaluation sheets with comments
21	7	Toby Quitscand & NEH Award Letter
21	8	NEH documents and correspondence

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Production, continued

Post Production, 1993

22	1	Editing Notes
22	2	Rough Cut Notes and Scoring Log
22	3	Optical Sheets/Sound Notes
22	4	Foley Tracks, Sound Effects
22	5	Notes for Music Mix
22	6	“Tierra Credits”
22	7	Tierra Credits September 28, 1993
22	8	Trims from the editing of <i>...and the Earth did not swallow him...</i> ”
22	9	“Censorship of “Earth”

Publicity, 1990-1997

Press Releases

23	1	“Press Book + Reviews-Master
23	2	Folder with cast photo, newspaper, and press release
23	3	Press Release/Reviews

Reviews, 1994-1996

23	4	Undated
23	5-6	1994 - 1995
23	7	1995
23	8	1995 - 1996

Press, 1990, 1994-1996

24	1-4	Press
24	5	Newspapers - October 1990
24	6	Newspapers – 1994 - 1995
25	1	Photocopies of articles/newspapers – 1994 & 1995
25	2	Photocopies of articles/advertisements - 1996
25	3	Latin Style Magazine, includes a profile of Severo Perez
25	4	Order forms for “ <i>...and the Earth did not devour him...</i> ”

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

...And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him... (1995)

Publicity, 1993

Press, continued

25	5	Promotional flyers, folders, and postcards
25	6	The 1993 Independent Feature Film Market Company Directory
25	7	Montclair State Fotoescultura Exhibit
25	8	Western Social Science Association 37 th Annual Conference Abstract Book

Film Festivals, 1978, 1992-1997

26	1	1978
26	2	1992
26	3	1993
26	4	February to September 1994
26	5	September 1994
26	6	16 th Independent Feature Film Market – September 1994
26	7	November & December 1994
27	1	February to March 1995
27	2	April & May 1995
27	3	June to October 1995
27	4	Moscow International Film Festival – July 1995
27	5	International Cairo - 1995
28	1	1996
28	2	1997
28	3	Other Festival Materials

***Elders* by Judith Perez, 1993**

Screenplay, 1993

28	4	<i>Elders</i> by Judith Perez - Draft July 1993
28	5	undated

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

Elders, continued

Photographs

- | | | |
|----|------|---|
| 28 | 6-11 | <i>Elders</i> by Judith Perez – Photographs |
| 29 | 1 | <i>Elders</i> by Judith Perez – Photographs |

Legal Materials

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 29 | 2 | Insurance Policy, Photoduplication forms, and SERVE Packet |
|----|---|--|

Yolanda's Story

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 29 | 3 | First Draft and Franciscan communications |
| 29 | 4 | Baptism File |
| 29 | 5 | Publicity- Invitation and Poster |
| 29 | 6 | Newspaper Clippings |

Willa Brown, 1996-1997

Screenplay, 1996-1997

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 29 | 7 | Working Draft, May 1996 |
| 29 | 8 | Draft and handwritten notes – October 16, 1996 |
| 29 | 9 | Draft, January 7, 1997 |
| 29 | 10 | Draft plus handwritten notes |
| 29 | 11 | Draft, undated |
| 29 | 12 | Script and Post Script |
| 29 | 13 | Copy edited script |
| 30 | 1 | Draft and notes [Removed from binder] |
| 30 | 2 | Dan's Draft |
| 30 | 3 | Partial Draft |

Production

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 30 | 4 | Handwritten notes |
| 30 | 5 | Notes, contact list, and phone logs |
| 30 | 6 | Code Book Notebook |

Series I: Films, continued

Box Folder

Willa Brown

Production, continued

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| 30 | 7 | “Film Search” |
| 30 | 8 | Production Sound Sheets |

Publicity

- | | | |
|----|----|---|
| 30 | 9 | “Willa Brown: An American Aviator” publicity card |
| 30 | 10 | Printout of photographs – cast and crew from ... <i>and the earth...</i> ,
<i>Soldierboy</i> production, and <i>Yolanda de Nuevo</i> . |

Plaza de la Raza, 1987

- | | | |
|----|----|--|
| 30 | 11 | “Chicano and Film” |
| 30 | 12 | Plaza de la Raza |
| 30 | 13 | Plaza de la Raza articles, April 18, 1987 |
| 30 | 14 | Documentation of Screening Activities for Plaza de la Raza |
| 30 | 15 | “First Weekend – Press Kit” |

Carmen + Cesar

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 31 | 1 | “Carmen + Cesar Proof Sheets + negs” (1 of 2) |
| 31 | 2 | “Carmen + Cesar Proof Sheets + negs” (2 of 2) |
| 31 | 3 | “Carmen + Cesar Proof Sheets + negs, also Elders.” |
| 31 | 4 | Clipboard for <i>The Eraser</i> |
| 32 | - | Two white proof sheet containers labeled “Carmen + Cesar” |

Series II: Television, 1987-2001

Box Folder

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 33 | 1 | Resume of Severo Perez and Publicity originals |
| 33 | 2 | “Tune in Yesterday” |
| 33 | 3 | Dreams of Flying – Script, revised 3 rd draft, January 1989 |
| 33 | 4 | Articles by Jesus Trevino and Melendez – Pelayo |
| 33 | 5 | The Pinata Makeers – Photographs |
| 33 | 6 | Seguin – Executive summary, publicity, press releases |
| 33 | 7 | Promotional brochures |

Series II: Television, continued

Box Folder

33	8	“There Goes The Neighborhood” Promotional cards
33	9	“Stand and Deliver” script [Working title “Walking on Water”]
33	10	Manuel Ramos’ “The Last Client of Luis Montez” – screenplay April 11, 2001.
33	11	Alamo... The Price of Freedom – shooting script, August 23, 1987 plus media.
33	12	“Alamo – Price of Freedom”
33	13	Reviews for “Alamo, Price of Freedom”
33	14	El Norte/The North – info and publicity
33	15	Mother of the Sun/Madre del Sol – Screening invitation
33	16	Letter and clipping from Arthur Ramirez, March 14, 1987
33	17	Note from DDLP + Kiki
33	18	Learning Garden – Brochure, drawing of a cow, and photographs
33	19	“The Lost Year”

Series III: Plays**Box Folder*****Soldierboy, 1980-1987*****Scripts, 1980-1987**

34	1	1980 [Working Title: Brother’s Keeper]
34	2	1980 [Working Title: Return of the Soldier]
34	3	1980 [Working Title: Return of the Soldier] First Draft
34	4	1980 [Working Title: Return of the Soldier]
34	5	Production script San Juan Bautista, September – December 1982
34	6	Al Franklin, Stage Manager script – December 1982
34	7	January 1983
34	8	January 1983
34	9	January 1984
35	1	January 1984
35	2	January 1984
35	3	January 1984
35	4	January 1984 plus notes
35	5	April 1985
35	6	April 1985
35	7	April 1985
35	8	April 1985
35	9	April 1985

Series III: Plays, continued

Box Folder

Soldierboy

Scripts, continued

36	1	April 1985
36	2	“Working 11-86”
36	3	October 1987 “not revised version”
36	4	October 1987
36	5	October 1987
36	6	Work Copy, undated
36	7	Draft, undated
36	8	Draft, undated
36	9	Draft, undated
37	1	Draft, undated
37	2	Draft, undated
37	3	Draft, undated
37	4	Draft, undated with notes
37	5	“Return of the Soldier” draft with notes
37	6	Spiral notebook with handwritten draft plus partial typed draft
37	7	Handwritten and typed draft
37	8	Draft plus notes, casting photographs and Bios
38	1	Second draft and rewrite roughs, April 17, 1981
38	2	Box for second draft and rewrite roughs, April 17, 1981
38	3	Draft typed and handwritten
38	4	Script draft handwritten and typed
38	5	Draft with notes and pictures

Partial Drafts, 1983

39	1	Script partial draft with notes
39	2	Script partial draft
39	3	Script partial draft
39	4	Script partial draft with notes
39	5	Script partial draft, January 1983
39	6	Misc. notes, research, maps, and pictures
39	7	Soldierboy Stat – typed in various fonts

Series III: Plays, continued

Box Folder

Soldierboy, continued

Budget, 1981

39 8 July 30, 1981

Publicity

39 9 Soldierboy cover photo
39 10 Newspapers
39 11 Magazines
39 12 "The Real War 1939-1945" Atlantic Monthly article, plus photocopy
39 13 Flyers
39 14 Programs and newsletters
39 15 Synopsis of the play
39 16 Handbill signed by cast

Speak Only of Cats, 1997

39 17 Draft – Speak Only of Cats (working title), March 6, 1997
39 18 Draft – Speak Only of Cats , June 5, 1997

Series IV: Books

The Challengers Aero Club, 2009-2010

Drafts, 2009-2010

40 1 First Draft version registered with WGA
40 2 January 2, 2009
40 3 First Draft, March 31, 2009
40 4 First Draft, March 31, 2009
40 5 First Draft, March 31, 2009
40 6 First Draft, May 8, 2009
40 7 July 20, 2009
40 8 July 23, 2009
40 9 Draft of various chapters 2009-2010

41 1 Draft, February 19, 2010
41 2 Draft, undated
41 3 Draft, undated

Series IV: Books

Box Folder

The Challengers Aero Club

Drafts, continued

41	4-5	Draft , undated
42	1-2	Draft, undated
42	3-4	Draft, Part 1 (1 of 2)
42	5	Multiple drafts, undated
43	1	Second Draft, Part 1
43	2	Second Draft, Part 2
43	3	Partial draft, undated
43	4	Chapter outline/Timeline

Series V: National Endowment for the Humanities Proposals, 1990

Box Folder

44	1	<i>"Polynesians: Voyagers of Rediscovery."</i> September 1990
44	2	<i>"Citizen Stalin"</i>
44	3	<i>"The Restless Conscience"</i> , 1990
44	4	<i>"Roman City"</i>
44	5	<i>"The Glory and the Power"</i> September 12, 1990
44	6	<i>"Five Suns: Origin Myths of Central Mexico"</i> September 4, 1990
44	7	<i>"The Creative Faculty"</i> , September 1990
44	8	<i>"Trinidad's Calypso – Social, Cultural, Political Content"</i>