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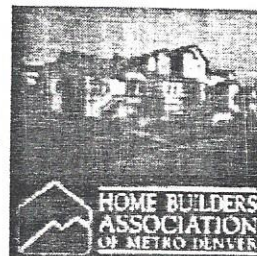
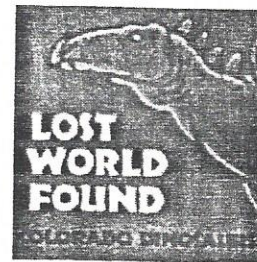
Guantanamera (NR)

A Cuban mortician cooks up a scheme to save fuel by a relay system of hearses, leading to a comic, macabre trip across the length of the island with the body of his wife's aunt.

Starring Carlos Cruz, Mirtha Ibarra, Jorge Perugorria, Pedro Fernandez, Conchita Brando, and Raul Eguren. Directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea and Juan Tabio.

Showing in Denver on 10/21/97:

Theater Name	Showtimes	Amenities
Landmark Chez Artiste 3	5:20 7:40 9:45	

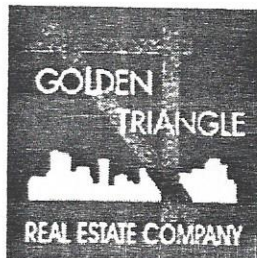


digitalcity Review

Guantanamera Follows Strawberry and Chocolate as Second Great Cuban Film Distributed in U.S.

by Peter Jones on October 13, 1997

In 1994, director Tomas Gutierrez Alea made movie history. His film *Strawberry and Chocolate* was the first from Castro's Cuba to be released in the U.S. It was also the first Cuban movie to be nominated for an Academy Award (Best Foreign Film). The movie – with its sympathetic portrayal of a homosexual and critical take on the nation's political system – was a groundbreaking film that made many wonder if the climate for artistic freedom in Cuba had changed.



Now comes Alea's *Guantanamera*, a comedic road picture and, not surprisingly, the second Cuban film to receive wide U.S. distribution. In what should stand as one of cinema's great ironies, the director responsible for easing the political and artistic barriers faced by Cuban filmmakers died before *Guantanamera* could reach American theaters. *Guantanamera* is a fitting closure to Alea's filmography. The marvelous comedy is blessed by vibrant, interesting characters, a wonderfully talented cast and a poignant screenplay about the unpredictability of love, life and death. And, as would be predicted, *Guantanamera* is spiced with wry commentary on Cuba's frail political system and its ever-bumbling bureaucracy.

By way of the classic road film genre, Alea takes the audience on a delightful odyssey of self-realization and sexual awakening – all set to the infectious famed song that gives the movie its title.

Adolfo, a Communist party bureaucrat is unhappily married to Georgina, a former economics professor frustrated by the Cuban system. Eager to advance his flagging career, Adolfo has devised an over-bearing "cost-cutting" scheme to reduce state fuel consumption. The plan? Require entourages transporting caskets across Cuba to change hearses in every city they pass through.

When Georgina's aunt dies and the couple must take the body to Havana for the funeral, Adolfo finds himself a victim of his own "efficiency" plan. The time consuming hearse-stops also bring peril to Adolfo's already loveless marriage. Mariano, a truck driver and former student of Georgina's, is also

on his way to Havana. As he heartedly tries to win Georgina's affections at every stop, Georgina slowly sees how the handsome Mariano may be her ticket to a happy, more meaningful life.

The strong, character-driven script is brought to life by the film's strong cast. Mirtha Ibarra and Jorge Perugorria, both stand-outs, bring captivating charm to Georgina and Mariano (much as both actors did in *Strawberry and Chocolate*). Carlos Cruz portrays Adolfo with appropriate sympathy. Here, the party loyalist is the hapless dupe of his own blind ambition. All told, *Guantanamera* is a wonderful, rare sort of movie – funny, insightful, emotionally charged and an intriguing glimpse at modern Cuban culture. The film is also a fitting – and bittersweet sign-off from a truly gifted director.

Peter Jones has been a movie journalist in the Denver area since the early '80s and currently edits the trade journal *Exposed* and *CineScene*, the quarterly newsletter of the Denver Film Society.

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