

# Download Free Black Caesars and Foxy Cleopatras: A History of Blaxploitation Cinema by Odie Henderson

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By: Odie Henderson

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The definitive account of Blaxploitation cinema, the freewheeling, often shameless, and wildly influential genre from a distinctive voice in film history and criticism. In 1971, two films grabbed the movie business, shook it up, and launched a genre that would help define the decade. Melvin Van Peebles' *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, an independently produced film about a male sex worker who beats up cops and gets away, and Gordon Parks' *Shaft*, a studio-financed film with a killer soundtrack, were huge hits, making millions of dollars. *Sweetback* upended cultural expectations by having its Black rebel win in the end, and *Shaft* saved MGM from bankruptcy. Not for the last time did Hollywood discover that Black people went to movies too. The Blaxploitation era was born. Written by film critic Odie Henderson, *Black Caesars and Foxy Cleopatras* is a spirited history of a genre and the movies that he grew up watching, which he loves without irony (but with plenty of self-awareness and humor). Blaxploitation was a major trend, but it was never simple. The films mixed self-empowerment with exploitation, base stereotypes with essential representation that spoke to the lives and fantasies of Black viewers. The time is right for a reappraisal, understanding these films in the context of the time, and exploring their lasting influence.

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## Sommaire

Étape 1 -

Commentaires

Matériaux

Outils

Étape 1 -