



# Reflections on Blaxploitation: Actors and Directors Speak

*David Walker, Andrew J. Rausch, Chris Watson*

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In the early 1970s, a new breed of film emerged that would completely change the way black people were presented in movies. With their afros picked to spherical perfection and their guns blazing, big bad soul brothers and super sexy sisters lit up movie theaters across the country. Never before had black men and women appeared on screen in quite this way. In time, these films would be called "blaxploitation." And while it has long been debated exactly which film launched the blaxploitation era, the financial success of Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* and Gordon Parks's *Shaft* helped open the flood gates for the more than 200 films that are now considered blaxploitation.

*Reflections on Blaxploitation: Actors and Directors Speak* is a collection of interviews with many of the men and women who defined the genre. In candid conversations, some of the most important figures of the era describe what it was like to work on these films and what impact they had on American culture. Among those interviewed are such icons as Jim Brown (*Slaughter*), Antonio Fargas (*Foxy Brown*), Gloria Hendry (*Hell Up in Harlem*), Jim Kelly (*Black Belt Jones*), Ron O'Neal (*Superfly*), William Marshall (*Blacula*), and Fred Williamson (*Hammer*). Also featured here are some of the most influential names behind the scenes, including Larry Cohen (*Black Caesar*), Oscar Williams (*Five on the Black Hand Side*), and Melvin Van Peebles. This volume also includes a filmography of every known (or rumored) blaxploitation film, including their availability on VHS and DVD.

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