# A Short History of Black Actors in Hollywood



#### Stereotyped Roles for Blacks

The Mammy, the Uncle Tom, the Coon, the Buck, and the Tragic Mulatta

## 1950s: Sidney Poitier

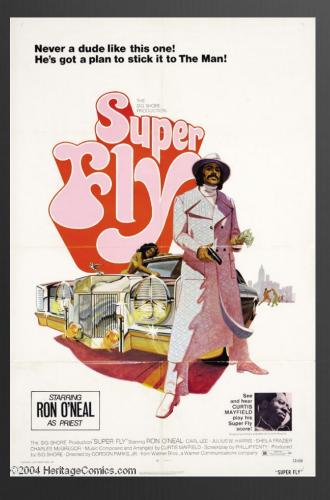


### 1960s: integrationist fantasies; black indie films





### 1970s: Blaxploitation; interracial buddy comedies





GENE WILDER JILL CLAYBURGH RICHARD PRYOR

AN ARTHUR HILLER FILM "SILVER STREAK" A MILLER-MILKIS-COLIN HIGGINS PICTURE

Also starreg NED BEATTY - CLIFTON JAMES and PATRICK MCGOOHAN as Roger Deversal Executive Producers MARTIN RANSOHOFF and FRANK VABLANS

Produced by THOMAS L. MILLER and EDWARD MILKIS Directed by ARTHUR HILLER

Written by COLIN HIGGINS Music by HENRY MANCINI COLOR BY DE LUXE\*

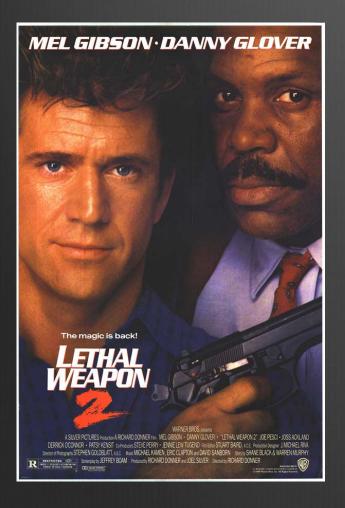
WHEA.

31.035

SEVER STREAM

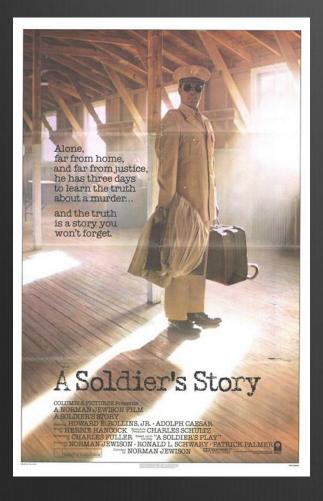
N'N, RESIDE DAMAGE

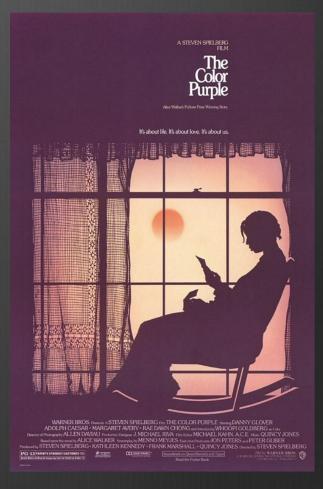
#### 1980s: interracial buddy action films





### 1980s: Black-themed films made by white directors

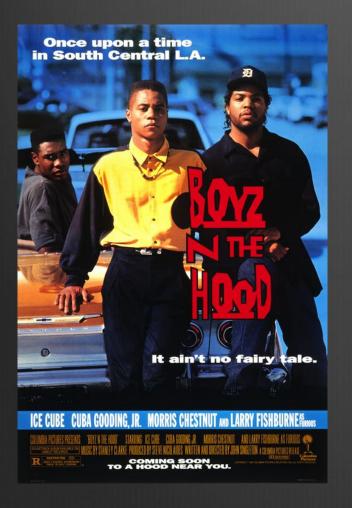


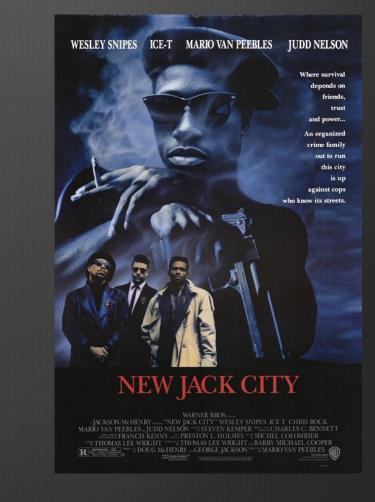


#### 1989

- Solory
- Section 2 Lethal Weapon 2
- Driving Miss Daisy
- Do the Right Thing

#### 1990s: Films by Black Directors





### Strategies of Containment

- Second casting black men in comedies or comedic roles
- casting a black actor in films with few other blacks or that don't directly address the black experience
- not casting black men in sexual and romantic roles
- representing the black male as inferior or dangerous
- using political positioning: cinematic techniques that may reveal an unconscious racist perspective

## Political Positioning

- Second a camera placement: who gets the most close-ups?
- Second control of the frame?
  Second control of the frame?
- editing: whose POV is used most? who most often gets the one-shot after a two-shot?
- Sound: whose voice is heard more offscreen?
- Screen time: who gets more?

#### Whiteness and Cinematography

- white skin is privileged, due to the technical quality of film stock, cameras, and lighting
- Solution white skin as the norm
- nonwhite skin is a problem for the cinematographer
- white skin has 35 percent reflectance; black skin has less than 16 percent
- light balance is the primary issue

#### Whiteness and Cinematography

- Even when a film intends to treat black and white actors equally, to represent racial equality in the diegesis, the performance of stocks, cameras, and lighting makes it difficult or impossible to do so.
- Since the digital revolution, this differential representation is somewhat solvable.