

# America's Alternate Film History

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CP460

# Independent Cinema

- 🎬 Belton glamorizes Hollywood in his book *American Cinema/ American Culture* but leaves out the the low-budget, underground, grungy Independent Cinema that played a vital role in shaping today's cinema.

# Grindhouse Films

- 🎬 Grindhouse was a term given to theaters that replaced live grind dances and stripteases , for films depicting the same.
- 🎬 “The term itself-grindhouse- was seen at that point to equate a film of low budget and even lower quality with a mode of production aimed at churning out as many films as possible for maximum profit.”

# Cautionary Films

- 🎬 Films Like *Reefer Madness* (1936) and *Mom and Dad* (1947) were able to depict drugs and nudity because they were deemed educational, and so were approved by the Production Code.
- 🎬 “Somehow the censors let movies about nudist camps slip by with nary a cut for much the same reasons the government didn’t question religious practices. It was proven to the motion picture industry’s satisfaction that nudists sincerely believed what they were doing.” –Rich Meyers

# Sexploitation

- ⊙ This led to films like *Lorna (1964)* and *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! (1965)* both directed by Russ Meyers. These films were a step away from the nudist films and offered more concrete storylines and were characterized by their high violence, and sexuality of women.
- ⊙ “When I got into the exploitation distribution business...the total output in the whole United States was about eight to ten pictures a year, so that the sixty theaters that had to play this stuff every year played each one ten to twelve weeks, gave you a fair percentage, and you made a fortune with it.”

-David Freidman

# Blaxploitation

- 🎬 African Americans began producing independent films like *Sweet Sweetback's Badasssss Song*. The success of these films caught the attention of Hollywood, who at the time was battling a major crisis to raise revenue.
- 🎬 Searching for a way to make films cheaper while increasing ticket sales, Hollywood contributed to making Blaxploitation films.

# Modern Day Independent Film

- 🎬 Independently financed films are more common and achievable today than they were seventy years ago.
- 🎬 Today more films are being made independently, and then being sold to larger studios to distribute.
- 🎬 Films made outside of the Hollywood system no longer lack the grungy, low quality production standards that they began with.