

Bold! Daring! Shocking! True: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959

Eric Schaefer

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Eric Schaefer : Bold! Daring! Shocking! True: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bold! Daring! Shocking! True: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Daniel SampleVery enjoyable book that gives you a glimpse into the poverty row film industry.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wish It Had More PhotosBy John R. RamboA very academic read. I think I'd have enjoyed it more had the author wrote while

drinking....and hung over. Good. More a college text than an interesting read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The movie world beyond the major studios By mrliteral As with many genres and styles, the term "exploitation film" is rather flexible, and is often used interchangeably with "grindhouse film" to describe the low-budget movies of the 1960s and 1970s which focused on sex, kung fu, graphic horror and other subjects that were still outside the mainstream. For Eric Schaefer, however, the term refers to a rather different film from a different era: as described in his book, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!*, the classic exploitation film was produced between 1919 and 1959. The producers of these movies were the ultimate in low-budget operators, and it often showed: the films they made are often unintentionally funny due to their overacting, cheap sets and over-the-top writing. The most well-known of the classic exploitation films is probably *Tell Your Children*, more commonly known as *Reefer Madness*; its overreaction to the threat of marijuana make it pretty amusing to those who watch it today. Indeed, the focus of many of these movies is supposed social ills: drug use, venereal disease and prostitution being the most significant. Often based more on fiction than fact, these films took a condescending, rather prudish view of drug use and sex. A single, even inadvertent, puff of pot was enough to ruin a life, and any act of sex for pleasure (as opposed to procreation) was equally ruinous. The audience is asked to condemn the actions of the characters even while they are entertained by their vices. Schaefer discusses these different types of exploitation films along with the background of the industry. In the classic era, these movies acted as an alternative to the major studio releases, which during the height of the Production Code, offered an often whitewashed view of life. The exploitation films may have been poorly made, but they provided a grittier (and often more exciting) perspective on the world. This is a good, well-detailed book that details the history of a film world that is rarely discussed and produced movies that are rarely seen today. If you like watching these films for the pure so-bad-they're-good amusement value of them, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* will add to your enjoyment by giving you insights into the people that made them.

Unashamed nudists, high-flying hopheads, brazen strippers, vicious vice lords, and high school girls who find themselves in trouble comprise the population of exploitation films. In the first full-scale history of these low-budget movies of decades past, Eric Schaefer reveals how this pioneering form of trash film purveyed the forbidden thrills of explicit sexual behavior, drug use, and vice that the mainstream movie industry could not show. *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* is a meticulously researched, interdisciplinary study that is informed by a wide range of sources including both mainstream and industry newspapers and periodicals, archival accounts, personal interviews, and the films themselves. Schaefer begins by exploring the unique mode of production of exploitation movies, their distribution, and the outrageous exhibition practices that were rooted in the traditions of sideshows and carnivals. His close analysis of dozens of films, such as *The Road to Ruin*, *Modern Motherhood*, *One Way Ticket to Hell*, and *The Wages of Sin* demonstrates that these films were more than simply bad movies. By situating exploitation films in a historical context and organizing them according to the social problems they addressed, Schaefer shows how they evolved during a period of forty years and how, during that time, they shaped public policies and attitudes. Finally, he focuses on the changes in the postwar American film industry that led to the decline of the classical exploitation film and set the stage for the rise of sexploitation in the 1960s. Engagingly written, illustrated with rare photographs, posters, production stills, and ad slicks, and offering a full filmography, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* reveals a forgotten side of film history and American culture. It will delight and inform those interested in film history, cultural studies, American studies and history, and the many fans of exploitation films.

.com Eric Schaefer's readable history of exploitation movies begins with a description of what the genre ain't--the rabid "nudie pics" of Russ Meyer (*Faster, Pussycat, Kill! Kill!*) and the drecky, knowing arthouse flicks made by Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey (Andy Warhol's *Dracula*). Though these camp movies are sometimes labeled "exploitation," they do not exactly fit Schaefer's definition. For him, exploitation is the brand of movie that puts nudity and antisocial behavior up on the screen in the name of civic-mindedness and healthy social conscience--and with a wink. Between 1919 and 1959, sexual hygiene and antidrug movies with kinky, lascivious titles such as *No Greater Sin* (1939), *Call Girls* (1959), *Nudist Land* (1937), and *Paroled from the Big House* (1938) traveled through the country outside regular theater chains, advertising themselves as "shocking" yet educational. The posters didn't slouch either. *No Greater Sin* promised viewers, "You'll gasp, you'll wince, you'll shudder... so powerful, many will faint!" Schaefer argues that studying the films tells us cartloads about the way Puritanical America grappled with complex issues like premarital sex, drugs, infidelity, and alternative lifestyles. And he may be right: by 1959, audiences had begun turning to European films like *And God Created Woman*, films that treated exploitation movie subjects legitimately. The story of a lost culture, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!* is finally an archaeology of the immediate past that throws our present incoherence about sex, public-mindedness, virtue, and immediate gratification into high and sometimes hilarious relief. With priceless historical black-and-white photographs. --Lyll Bush From *Library Journal* The "classic" exploitation film of the silent to postwar eras was made cheaply with glaringly poor production values by a small independent firm, was independently distributed and usually shown in theaters not affiliated with the majors, and generally featured a forbidden topic. The genre was created when the major studios began to realize the

economic advantages of some sort of self-censorship; what Hollywood would no longer put on the screen—sex, drug use, venereal disease, prostitution, and nudity—the exploitation filmmakers would. With minuscule budgets and no identifiable stars, the exploitation film maker only had the lure of the forbidden to get people into the theater. The first half of this book looks at the mechanics of the films; production, distribution, advertising, and exhibition differed greatly from Hollywood norms. The second half examines the major categories of exploitation films. A good look at a neglected topic; for academic and larger public libraries.

Marianne Cawley, Charleston Cty. Lib., SC Copyright 1999
Reed Business Information, Inc. An astonishing scholarly achievement, one of the most impressive books I've read in a decade. Schaefer's research is broad and profound. This is not only the reference work on the subject; it is a model of elegant argument.

Matthew Bernstein, author of *Walter Wanger, Hollywood Independent*