

Illuminating the Black Power Movement

New films explore FBI's historic obsession with Black leaders

Some of the most dramatic and important American stories have garnered the least attention in popular media. It's an obvious point, but a neglected one--money and power protect whose stories are told and

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY JUDGE DARLEEN ORTEGA



in what way. And that wholly fixable problem becomes harder to address the longer we neglect it--the scale of the untold stories is so large, and how we hear them will be impacted by the ongoing and unnamed skewing of our collective perspective.

It's important to notice this so we accord appropriate respect to artists who make a serious attempt to wade into underexplored territory, and also so that we view our response with appropriate skepticism and curiosity. I want folks to see "Judas and the Black Messiah"--but first I want us to look around. Where are the films depicting the Black Power movement, or the Black Panther Party? And in contrast, how many stories have made it into popular media in which law enforcement are the heroes?

Director Shaka King, collaborating with writers Kenny and Keith Lucas and Will Berson, plunge into the neglected side of that contrast, choosing



The new film "Judas and the Black Messiah," now streaming on HBO Max, shines a light on the leadership and assassination of Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois Black Panther Party in 1969, and Bill O'Neal, the young man who fed the FBI much of the information that made that assassination possible.

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