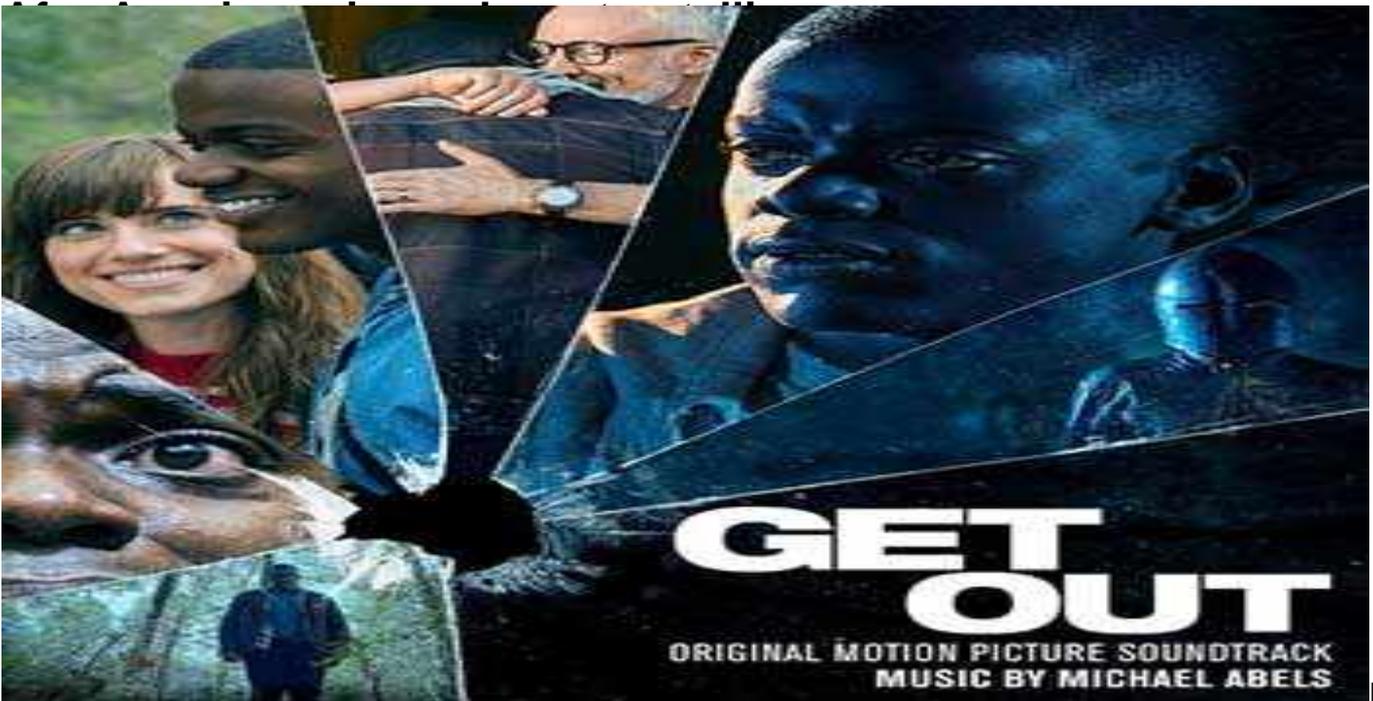




Modern Blacksploitation  
after so much struggle

### Description

**“Get Out” vs. “I Am Not Your Negro”**: a devolution in the imagery of



It took

me a while to write this article because of all the stirring up it brought in me. I do not, by any means possible, pretend to fully understand the sociological nor the political realities of Afro-Americans. I can only write as a middle-aged film critic, as someone who has lived through the seventies, eighties, and so on, someone who has always had a conscious awareness of injustices and hardships of all, immigrants, Natives, Afro-Americans and Afro-Canadians.



While Hollywood seemed to accept more and more Afro-Americans into its midst, a picture such as **Get Out**, written and directed by **Jordan Peele**, Afro-American himself, is such a renewed incarnation of Blacksploitation that it sent shivers down my back. Especially since I saw, earlier the same day, the documentary **I Am Not Your Negro**, directed by **Raoul Peck**, based on the book *Remember this House*, by **James Baldwin**, the intellectual who accompanied **Martin Luther King** and **Malcolm X**. This film is more than just a rendering of Baldwin's life; it is a poignant, vibrant document on this tumultuous era. And since Mr. Baldwin was directly involved in this historical period, what he has to say is doubly interesting.

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*Get Out* isn't such a bad film. It's just the way it tries to draw Afro-Americans into its web that annoys me. First, they are, in spite of holding major roles in this picture, quite secondary to the core of the storyline. A white woman, Rose Armitage (**Allison Williams**), dates an Afro-American, Chris Washington (**Daniel Kaluuya**). She brings him to her family for a weekend. Her father is a renowned neurosurgeon (**Bradley Whitford**) and her mother a psychiatrist/hypnotherapist (**Catherine Keener**). There, Chris finds that what lays behind this apparent

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Not for

the fact that there is an element of pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo at play, and in spite of the fact that all whites in this movie wish for black 'hosts' (you'll better understand when you watch this movie), this is an attempt at instrumentalizing Afro-Americans in a way that is both novel and shocking. And, if all those rich white suburbanites are in the process of choosing a black host, why are there just two other Afro-Americans who went through this process in the first place? And why has the matriarch of this family been placed in a housekeeper's body, all the while serving everyone else? Illogical, to say the least.

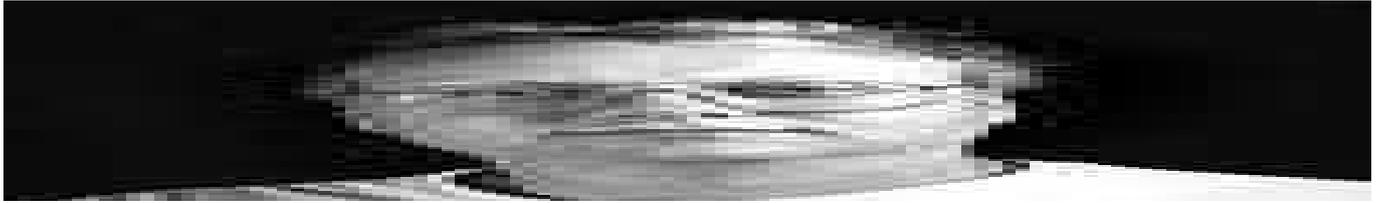
In contrast, **I Am Not Your Negro** explores the history of racism in America, in a way that will leave you speechless.

In contrast, *I Am Not Your Negro* explores the history of racism in America, in a way that will leave you speechless. James Baldwin never finished his manuscript, just writing thirty pages. But the strength of this film resides in the meticulous research done by Raoul Peck and his team to find images, photos, films of that era and of Mr. Baldwin himself, to bring to life the black community's past struggles, and to link them to their situation in the present day.

This is why those two films pose themselves in such a strong thematic opposition. Where one simply uses Afro-Americans in an objectified manner, the other piles up the list of inequalities and victories towards their emancipation and equal rights. Isn't Hollywood a cesspool of irony...?

Images: Blumhouse Productions

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### **Luc Archambault**

*Writer and journalist, globe-trotter at heart, passionate about movies, music, literature and contemporary dance, came back to Montreal to pursue his unrelenting quest for artistic meaning.*



### **Category**

1. Art | Culture
2. Cinema | Video
3. Review

### **Tags**

1. film
2. Get Out
3. I Am Not Your Negro
4. James Baldwin
5. Jordan Peele
6. Luc Archambault
7. Malcolm X
8. Martin Luther King
9. Raoul Peck
10. review

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