



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

*Eric Schaefer*

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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.

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