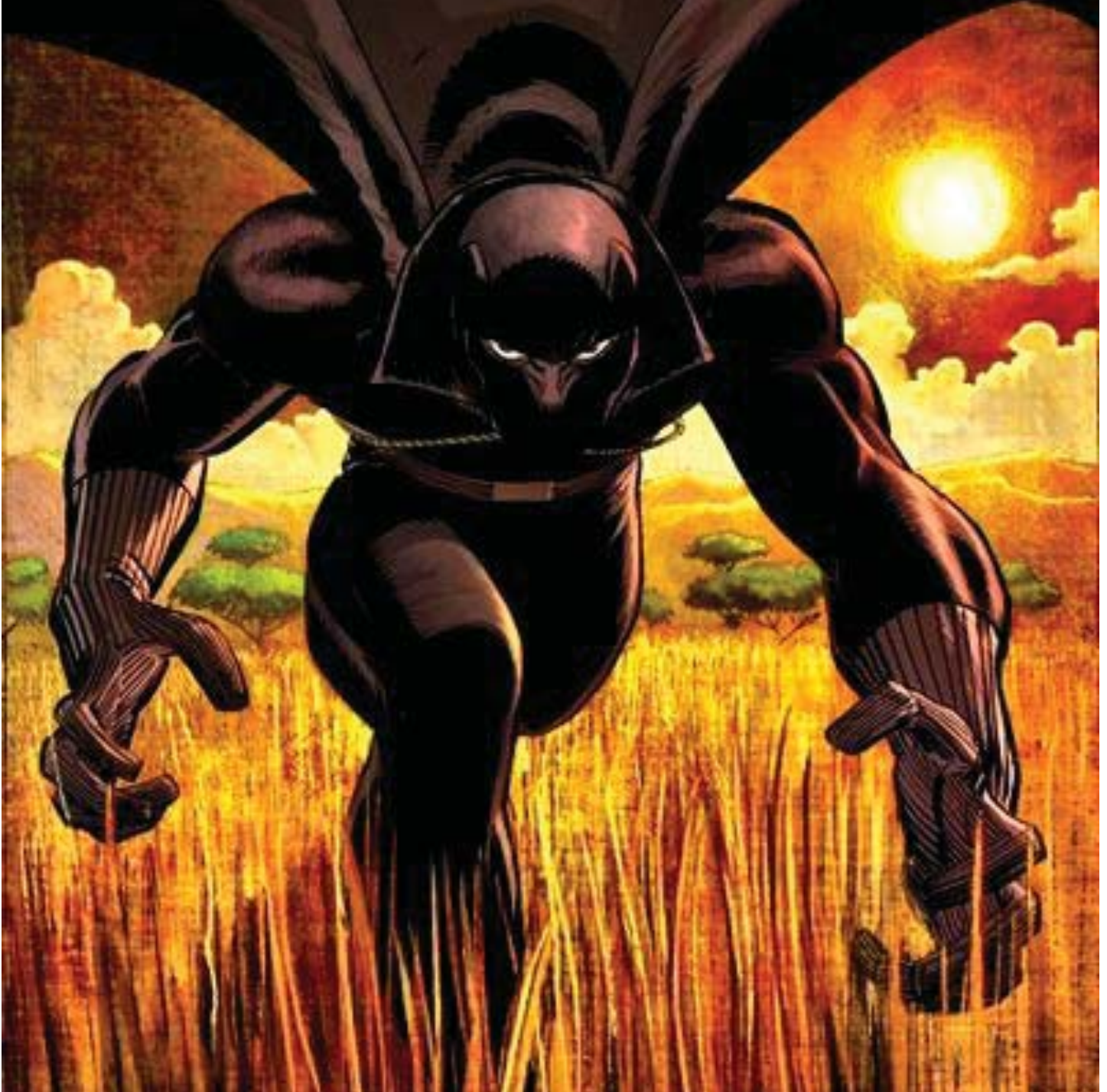


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**ALL HAIL KING T'CHALLA:
MARVEL'S AFRO-FUTURIST AVENGER, THE
BLACK PANTHER**
LEAPS FROM COMICS TO THE SILVER SCREEN!
PLUS...BLAXPLOITATION COMICS!

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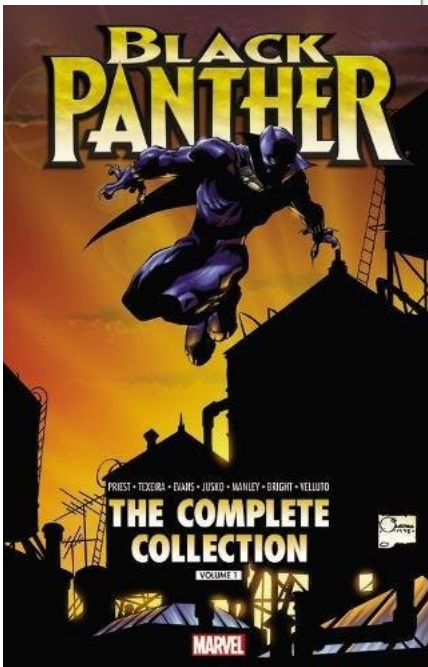
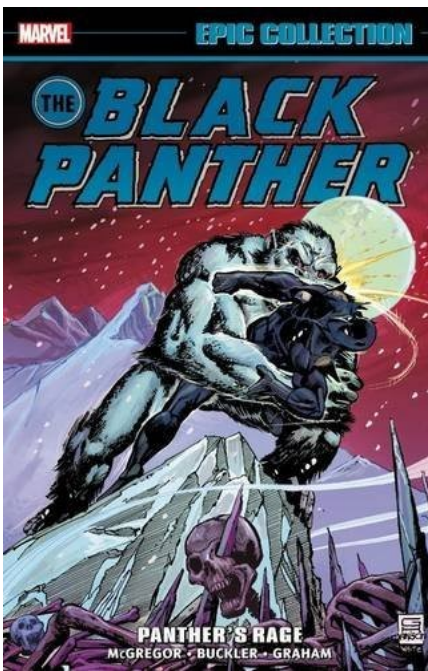
AND...HENRY & GLENN FOREVER & EVER



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of



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Reading Is Just the Beginning!



THE BLACK PANTHER

debuted in Marvel's *Fantastic Four* #52 July 1966. Originally dubbed the "Coal Tiger" by artist Jack Kirby (with the colorful yellow-and-black outfit to go with the name), writer Stan Lee wisely renamed the character after the sleek and dominant apex predator, with a simple but elegant costume to match. The first superhero of African descent, Prince T'Challa was the heir apparent to the throne of Wakanda, an imaginary state in Africa. Wakanda maintained its independence thanks to the very thing that made the nation the target of exploitation: vibranium. This super-metal of the Marvel Universe exists only in Wakanda. That's why its leaders had hidden their country from the outside world, becoming a scientific wonderland thanks to vibranium, the inventiveness of the Wakandan people and the steady rule of generations of Black Panthers. (For instance, T'challa's daddy whooped Captain America himself when Cap came looking to strong-arm Wakanda into joining the Allied effort in WW2.) Beginning with T'Challa's challenge to the Fantastic Four, the Black Panther engaged with the world, joining the Avengers, mixing it up with Daredevil, marrying Storm of the X-Men and eventually entering the Illuminati, the secret group of bigwigs that's been running the Marvel Universe behind the scenes. It's been a wild ride for T'Challa, King of the Wakandans, and it's going to get wilder once the Black Panther hits the screen in the most anticipated superhero movies in years! The upcoming feature film draws its inspiration from the entirety of the Panther's four-color career. New items such as the Young Adult novel *The Young Prince*, the *Black Panther* Golden Book and the upcoming *Ultimate Guide* fill in some of T'Challa's history. But start with the comics, beginning with.....

Epic Collection: *Panther's Rage*. Serialized in the mid-1970s title *Jungle Action*, ...*Rage* was written by Don Macgregor and mostly drawn by Billy Graham, one of the few African-American pros of comics' Bronze Age. Many comics scholars call the saga of Erik Killmonger's super-powered rebellion against T'Challa's reign Marvel's first graphic novel.

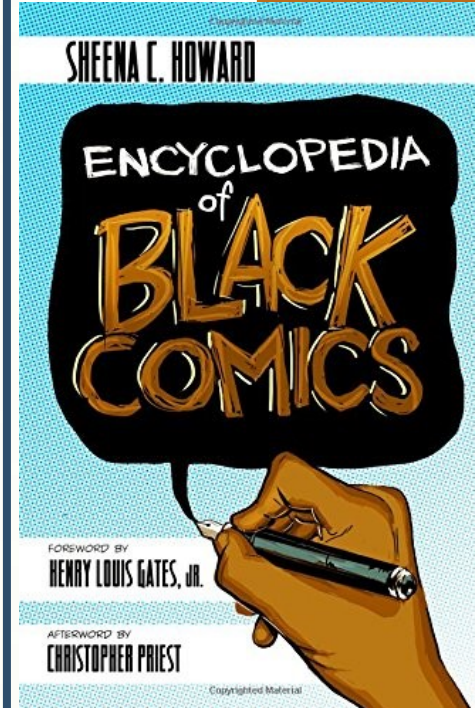
Christopher Priest's *Black Panther: The Complete Collection* comes in three volumes, with art by Mark Texeira. Formerly known as Jim Owsley, the writer got his start scripting other black heroes such as the Falcon and the cast of the all-black imprint, Milestone Comics. Priest brought a touch of international spycraft to his Panther, introducing US State Department agent Everett Ross, played by Martin Freeman in the film.

Reginald Hudlin's *Black Panther: The Complete Collection* is another three volume set, written by Priest's successor, Reginald Hudlin. An established player in Hollywood, Hudlin wrote the Panther's adventures while he was President of Black Entertainment Television. Hudlin brought T'Challa back to Wakanda. Invasions from without and enemies from within test the Panther, even as he finds a new ally—and bride.

Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Black Panther: A Nation Under Our Feet* is the first story arc written by the author of the bestselling jeremiad *Between the World and Me*. The political turmoil that has been seething beneath the surface of Wakanda finally explodes in civil war. The breathtaking art of Brian Stelfreeze brings to life T'Challa's desperate struggle to save his nation.

GO TO LEXPUBLIB.ORG!

The contributions of African-American cartoonists have been overlooked too often in histories of comics. Now Dr. Sheena C. Howard shines a spotlight on African-American creators. Arranged alphabetically, *Encyclopedia of Black Comics* (Fulcrum) covers a broad range of artists and writers, from pioneers of the funny pages like Jackie (Torchy Brown) Ormes, Brumby (Luther) Brandon and Wee Pals' Morrie Turner to contemporary stripsters like Keith Knight, Robb Armstrong and Barbara Brandon-Croft. Comic books are well represented: Golden Age greats get their due, like A.C. Hol-



ingsworth and the magnificent Matt Baker, whose slick, sensual artwork sold the likes of "Tiger Girl" (see last issue) and *Pictorial Confessions* (see "Meanwhile"). Modern contributors range from the creators discussed page right to indie artists like Ron Wimberly and Whitney Taylor. I do have one major complaint: where's "Grass" Green? Richard Eugene Green was the first black participant in underground comics and the fanzine movement of the 1960s. Back when I toured conventions, "Grass" was often the only brother in the room. Where's his entry?

Exploding across the screens of grindhouse cinemas and drive-in theaters across the nation, the film genre that quickly became known as "blaxploitation"

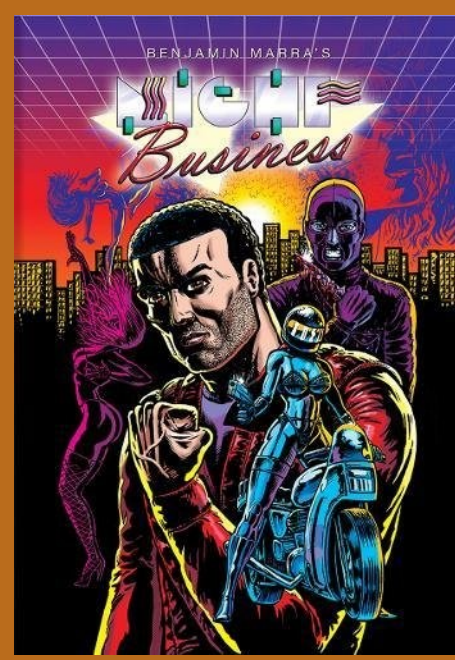
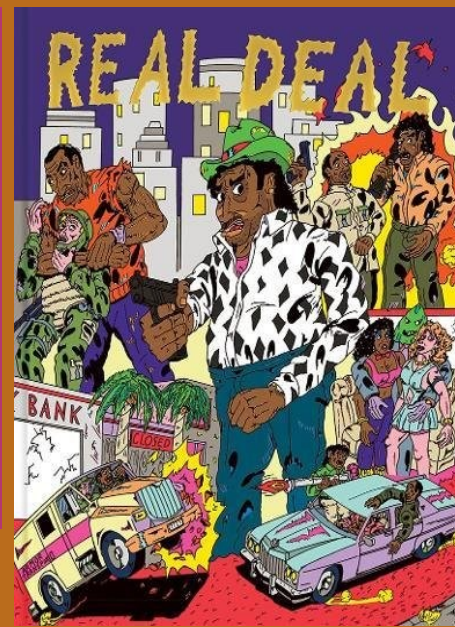
was one of the hallmarks of 1970s pop culture. Movies like *Shaft*, *The Mack* and *Cleopatra Jones* both expressed and, yes, exploited the energy and agony of the black experience in Nixonian America. Decades on, the aesthetics of Blaxploitation still shape our cultural narrative, in film, music, even comics.

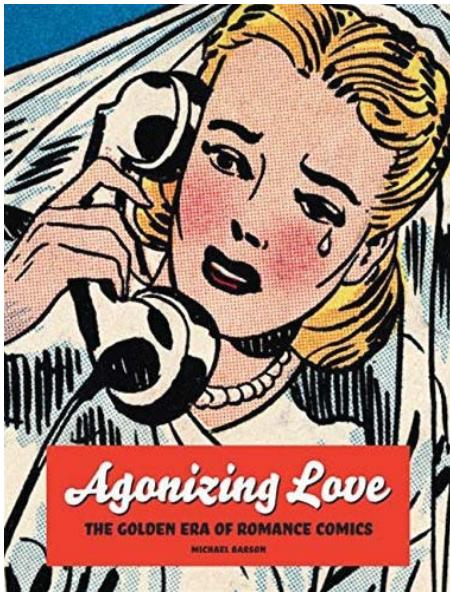
African-Americans were as rare in the indie "black & white" self-publishing wave of the 1990s as they were in the underground and punk movements of earlier decades. But that didn't stop "R.D. Bone" and "Raw Dog" (writer H.P. McElwee and artist Lawrence Hubbard) from releasing *Real Deal* Comix. Bone & Dog called their savage burlesques of ghetto life in the Los Angeles of the Reagan Era "Urban Terror". Although tongue-in-cheek, their comics were still harsh and violent and NOT for the kiddies. The hardcover from Fantagraphics collects all seven issues in one big beautifully ugly hardcover.

Meanwhile, the look and style of Blaxploitation gets updated in *Loose Ends* by the creators of *Southern Bastards*, Jason Latour and Chris Brunner. The protagonist—he ain't no hero—is white, but lives, loves and fights in that twilight realm of the eternal hustle where the trailer park meets the projects. Latour's twisty tale of bad criminals and badder cops winds from Afghanistan to Miami Beach without ever leaving the gutter. Brunner's art is that new school of cartooning that's smell-it-real but jacked with a Bugs Bunny buzz of exaggeration. And Rico Renzi's colors pop like bombs.

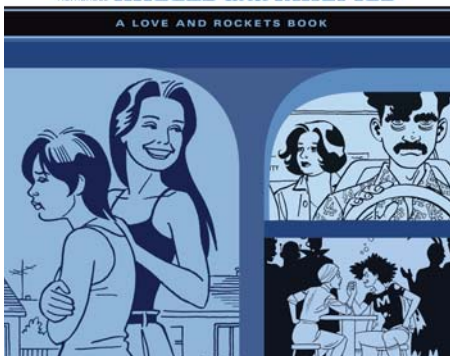
Benjamin Marra is not a natural cartoonist. But Marra invests his work with the intensity of a true believer, his unflinching depictions of sex and violence making him the prime successor of Spain Rodriguez. If Marra's *American Blood* is a 42nd Street all-nighter starring Billy Dee Williams, *Night Business* is a straight-to-VHS thriller starring Wesley Snipes. A masked maniac preying on strippers, an hog-riding assassin in lingerie, a cult of crazy rich white people, the one man who can stop the madness—

THAT'S BLAXPLOITATION!



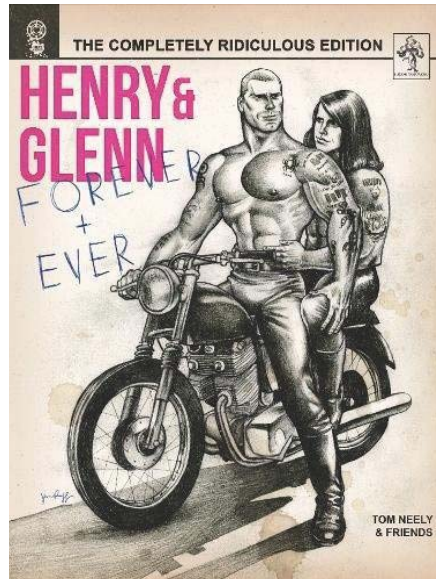


With Valentine's Day at its center, February is, of course, the month of love. What better time to read some of the original romance comics that swept the nation into a lovelorn frenzy? Though long a staple of the pulp market, love stories didn't hit the comics rack until 1948 with the debut of *Young Romance*. Within two years, there were so many romance comics such as *My Love Life*, *Heart Throbs* and *Teen-Age Temptations* swamping the stands, it triggered an industry-wide crash. Read those original tales of bliss and bathos in *Young Romance: The Best of Simon & Kirby's Romance Comics* (available from *Tates Creek*), *Agonizing Love* (*Beaumont*) and the various volumes of *Yoe's Weird Love* (*Northside* and *Tates Creek*). Though the last official love title came out in 1977, romance didn't leave comics. It just changed its outfit. While mainstream fans swooned over the soap opera antics of *X-Men*, alternative cartoonists devoted to a more naturalistic approach re-wrote the

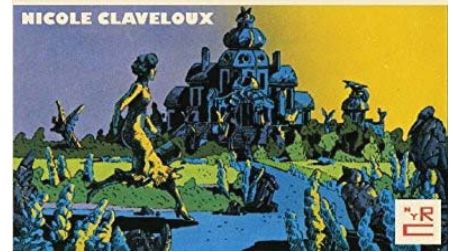


MEANWHILE

rules of romance in comics. One of the most influential of those artists is **Jaime Hernandez**. Using his half of the fabled *Love & Rockets* title to tell the story of Maggie Chascarillo and her pals'n'gals, Hernandez created a multi-generational epic involving dozens of characters. His latest collection, *Angels & Magpies* (*Fantagraphics*) compiles both the manic superheroine free-for-all "God & Science: The Return of the Ti-Girls" and "The Love Bunglers", both still available as single albums from *Central*. The latter is an achingly realistic slice-of-life that finally reunites Maggie with her on-again-off-again boyfriend Ray Dominguez, but only after a horrific incident connected to Maggie's murky



youth. If you can read that last page without getting weepy, you're tougher than me. But if you like your L-U-V with some laughs, check out *Henry & Glenn Forever + Ever: The Completely Ridiculous Version* (*Microcosm*). This book gathers the comic strips and illustrations of Henry & Glenn sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g—that is, former *Black Flag* vocalist, now talk show host **Henry Rollins** and former lead singer for the *Misfits* and all-around pompous ass **Glenn Danzig**. At first a goofy internet meme traded among punk rock fans, the idea exploded into a series of comic books, mostly written and drawn by **Tom Neely**, with further contributions from the likes of **Johnny Ryan** and Kentucky's own **J. Todd Dockery**. Neely's simple *Peanuts*-meet-*Archie* style hilariously details the ups and downs of the sturdy, studly Henry and the drama-driven Glenn and their Satan-hailing neighbors, **Darryl and John (Hall & Oates, that**



is). Cameos by rock legends like **Lemmy**, **Rob Halford** and **the Nuge** himself add to the yoks. Speaking of *Heavy Metal*—the magazine, not the music—**Nicole Claveloux** stood out from the early contributors to that ground-breaking comic with her odd and colorful art and sardonic, dream-like stories. Funny-strange, not funny-ha-ha, **Claveloux's** comics finally get the Anglo-phonetic attention they deserve with *The Green Hand* (*New York Review Comics*), thanks to **Donald Nicholson Smith's** expert translation and re-lettering. Find it at *Beaumont*. Meanwhile, did you know you can request comics for the Library? One such request was for *Incognito: The Classified Edition* (*Image*). This king-size comp of **Brubaker & Phillips'** superhero noir series covers the first two story arcs of an ex-bad guy who finds himself doing good while under witness protection. It's available from *Northside*, or go to lexpublib.org/

