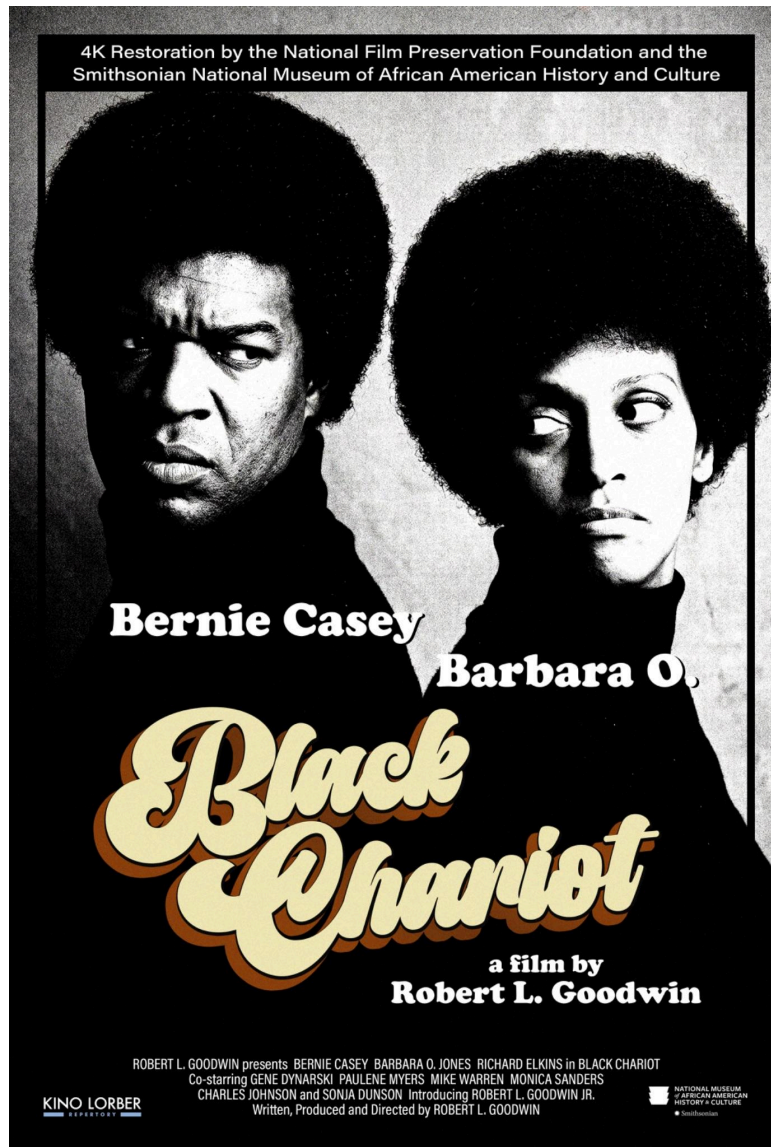


KINO LORBER



USA | 1971 | 90 minutes | English

NEW 4K RESTORATION

Restored from the original picture and sound negatives by the National Film Preservation Foundation and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

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SYNOPSIS

Robert Goodwin wrote, produced, and directed this lost gem of American independent cinema. Opening during a tense meeting between members of an underground Black Power group that leads to a stunning foot chase, Goodwin's film weaves past and present to tell the story of the social awakening of a character only referred to as "the drifter" (screen legend Bernie Casey in his first starring role!). Shot on both 35mm and video and boasting a fierce, early performance from L.A. Rebellion icon Barbara O. Jones, *Black Chariot* is a fascinatingly iconoclastic revelation. Though world-premiered at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in 1971, ***Black Chariot*** has remained under-screened for decades — until now.

Synopsis courtesy of the Academy Museum

ABOUT 'BLACK CHARIOT'

In his first starring role, Bernie Casey (*Brian's Song*) portrays Tuck, an irreverent young man living aimlessly in South Central L.A., where a Black militant group is organizing. At first uninterested in the group's social politics, Tuck becomes intrigued by one of their outspoken recruiters, Sylvia (Barbara O., *Daughters of the Dust*). She responds to Tuck's male bravado with her own demonstrations of strength, and persuades him to join the organization. When one of the group's members betrays them to the police, a death warrant is issued, and Tuck must decide between loyalty to the organization and the inner voice of his newly awakened conscience.

In the late 1960s, Robert L. Goodwin (1927-1983) was one of the first Black writers in television, with credits including *Bonanza*, *Love*, *American Style*, and *All in the Family*. He conceived ***Black Chariot*** as a battering ram to break the color barrier that kept African Americans out of the director's chair. Lacking studio support and commercial distribution, the renegade filmmaker launched an ambitious crowd-funding campaign, shot the film guerilla-style on the streets of Los Angeles, and four-walled a theater for its premiere. ***Black Chariot*** didn't just challenge the Hollywood business establishment. Told in an ambitious flashback structure, shot on a variety of film and video formats, ***Black Chariot*** violated the stylistic conventions of Hollywood and provided an early example of what a 1970s Black cinematic voice might look like.

Lacking commercial distribution, ***Black Chariot*** vanished after its initial run in Los Angeles, and remained clouded in mystery until it was restored by the Smithsonian

National Museum of African American History and Culture in cooperation with the National Film Preservation Foundation.

RESTORATION CREDITS

4K Restoration by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC) with funding from the National Film Preservation Foundation. Additional funding provided by NMAAHC's Earl W. and Amanda Stafford Center for African American Media Arts.

MAIN CREDITS

Director and Writer: Robert Goodwin

Producer: Robert Goodwin

Cast/Actors: Bernie Casey (The Drifter), Barbara O (The Drifter's Lover known as Barbarao), Richard Elkins (Leader of the Organization), Paulene Myers (The Drifter's Mother), Gene Dynarski (White doctor), Mike Warren, Dennis Pryor

Cinematography: Bob Bowen