

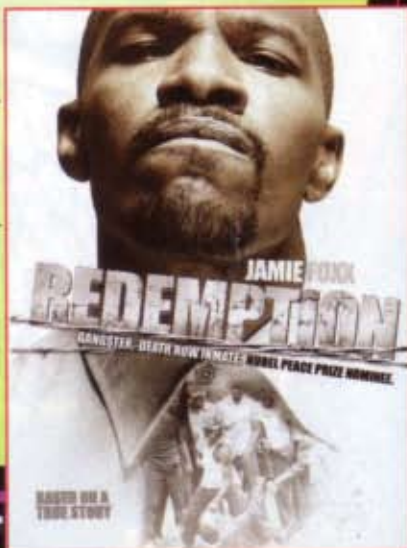
# REEL DEAL

## REDEMPTION

Since its inception in 1969, the Crips have grown into a vile and violent gang whose crimes stretch throughout the United States and have even found its way to parts of Africa and South America. Co-founder, Stanley "Tookie" Williams has been on death row since 1981 and has long since turned his mentality around and offered apologies regarding the unexpected boom of his once local gang and the subsequent chaos it's brought. Though he may never again be a free man, he takes pride in having freed his mind and has joined the fight to end some of the problems his creation has contributed to by offering online lectures and a series of inspirational books (see this month's *Book Bag* for an example of his work) geared towards enlightening inner-city youth. Originally aired on cable television, *Redemption* is sure to enlighten many people and turn them onto Tookie's effort.

In his star turn as Stan Williams, Jamie Foxx continues to prove that he's much more than just a comedian. He becomes Tookie as this story unfolds and brings the viewer on a journey that begins with Williams living out his earliest years on the gritty streets of Los Angeles. However, the film never glamorizes the gangster life that Williams once led, instead spending much of its time on his life after he was arrested and his meeting with author, Barbara Cottman Becnel (Lynn Whitfield). Becnel "discovered" Williams and brought his story to the public eye, helping him become a writer of children's books and then a Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

This very necessary DVD release features both the wide screen and full screen versions of the film; an insightful commentary track that features both director Vondie Curtis and Becnel; and a five-minute introduction from Tookie with a running still gallery.



## ME AND MRS. JONES

Being a 20-something professional isn't always what it's cracked up to be. For many, it's the first time in life that one sits back and realizes that, "Oh wow - I'm a full-fledged adult." On the money-makin' front, there can't be any slacking. Bills need to get paid, rent is due and of course, you need some expendable cash to live the nightlife.

You also ain't gettin' any younger, so those one-night stands and fleeting relationships become a thing of the past as you realize that you need to commit to something substantial if you want to eventually start a family. Welcome to the complicated life of Tracy Wainwright.

In this funny and sexy indie dramedy, up-and-coming actor Brian White (*The Shield/Mr. 3000*) plays the role of Tracy, a graphic artist with a disgusting apartment who's having a hard time landing a well-paying, full-time gig. Finally, he lands a job after a grueling interview for a position with a start-up Internet dating service. Ready to rise to the top, Tracy quickly enters a meaningless physical relationship with his typically tough-as-nails boss, Mrs. Jones (played by Wandachristine). Promotions and money come easily, and so do his friendships within the company. However, the last thing Mr. Wainwright expected to find was love in the name of a pretty young thing named Desiree (portrayed by Kim Fields). Their relationship flourishes and it quickly becomes clear that he's in this one for the long haul, problem is, he still has his boss waiting on the sidelines. Does he come clean to Desiree? Does he put his career on the line by calling it quits with Mrs. Jones? Tracy quickly learns that when the time finally comes, you really can't risk mixing business with pleasure.



## CEDRIC THE ENTERTAINER PRESENTS: The Complete Series

**A**s a former State Farm Insurance worker who majored in Mass Communications at Southeast Missouri State University, a young Cedric the Entertainer probably would have never imagined that his stand-up routine would land him the life of a high profile celebrity. Working his way up the ranks from being host of BET's *ComicView* and making guest appearances on his fellow King of Comedy's *Steve Harvey Show*, to landing roles in popular big screen comedies such as *Intolerable Cruelty*, *Barbershop* and *Johnson Family Vacation*, it's no surprise that television executives would choose to seek out his talent for a TV program. In doing so, they opted to go with a television genre that has always had a hard time staying on-air: Sketch comedy.

Cedric came up with a well-polished show that felt a lot like a friendlier version of Fox's own *In Living Color*. The show debuted in 2002 and – like most variety comedies – didn't even make it through a full season before getting canned. However, thanks to DVD and Fox's ability to quickly get their programming to the consumer market, fans of Cedric can now pick up his short-lived series in its entirety. Featuring music and dance interludes, each skit finds Cedric taking on any number of different roles from a sassy ol' lunch lady, a smooth Barry White-esque lover or even a completely out-of-character thug type, Cedric produces hilarious

skits that the entire family can enjoy. Spread over three discs, this set contains the *entire Cedric The Entertainer Presents* series, including six never-aired episodes and a number of extra features for those who can't get enough of *The Entertainer*.



## HIP-HOP STORY 2: DIRTY SOUTH!

**T**hough not necessarily a new thing, hip-hop documentaries have become quite popular in the ever-growing DVD market. It seems that every month there's a handful of new documentaries flooding the shelves – ranging from interesting to downright embarrassing to watch. The *Beef* series continues to do insanely well and we've already had a number of different rap artists – such as Tupac and Big Pun – highlighted in unauthorized biographical documentaries that have made their way to DVD. Other documentaries have focused on things such as the underground scene or Latinos in hip-hop. With the flame of the *Dirty South* still burning bright, it really comes as no surprise that there have been a few DVDs containing documentaries

regarding this branch of hip-hop. Of these, *Lyricist Lounge: Dirty States of America* told the supposed "untold" story of the Dirty South and featured input from both the eclectic side of the South's artists (Goodie Mob/OutKast) and the more *crunkalicious* side (Lil Jon). *Hip-Hop Story 2: Dirty South!* sticks to the latter half of this equation.

Focusing primarily on artists such as Lil Jon, David Banner, Ying-Yang Twins, TI and Mystikal, *Dirty South!* follows these artists through the South's most prominent cities: Atlanta, Houston and Miami. Rather than dipping into the untold story, this documentary dissects the South's popularity: platinum rappers and plenty of booty-shakin' "hot chicks." Through a number of interviews with the aforementioned rappers, we learn about the South's distinct flavor, unique sense of style, clothes and even their dialect. Most interesting is how this documentary openly acknowledges and explains the influence the Dirty South has had on mid-western artists such as Nelly, Chingy and Bow Wow. Light on extras, this DVD clocks in at a mere 66 minutes and is perfect for hip-hop fans who still don't have enough crunk in their diet.

