

## Slave Dolls are Latest Piece of 'Django' Controversy

*By Veronica Mackey*

'Django Unchained' the new slavery movie by director Quentin Tarantino, starring Jamie Foxx, was the topic of a town hall meeting on Saturday at Eso Won Books in Leimert Park.

Critics shared their displeasure of the film in which the main character, played by Foxx, becomes a hero, mercilessly killing white slave owners and any other white person who stands in his way to reunite with his wife, who was sold to the CandyLand Plantation in Mississippi.

The over-the-top violence was enough to make you queasy, and use of the N-Word was way overdone, but that wasn't the main focus of the debate. The film basically made a mockery of slavery, say critics like Tavis Smiley and Spike Lee, who called it "disrespectful." Making matters worse, the manufacturer, [National Entertainment Collectibles Association](#) (in conjunction with the studio, The Weinstein Company), is now selling action figures of the characters on Amazon. NECA also created action figures for Tarantino's "Kill Bill."

A press conference, spearheaded by community activist Najee Ali, was held on Tuesday in Leimert Park to protest the slave dolls and announce a boycott. The figures sell online for about \$35 each. There are six figures in all.

"There's no way, Quentin Tarantino and the Jewish community would allow a line of starved bald headed concentration camp dolls to be produced, and we shouldn't allow any one to trivialize the horrors of slavery," Ali wrote on Facebook.

The Leimert Park protest is part of a nationwide effort which includes Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network.

The story, which begins two years prior to the Civil War pairs the unlikely duo of Django, a slave, with Dr. Schultz, a white dentist-turned-bounty hunter played by Christoph Waltz. After Shultz buys Django's freedom, the pair hunt down bad guys and end up on a Mississippi plantation owned by Calvin J. Candie (Leonardo DiCaprio), where Django's beloved Broomhilda (Kerry Washington) is enslaved.

Throughout the lengthy saga, the movie pokes fun at the predicament of slavery, turning the tables on history as Foxx stands his ground as a gun toting, no-nonsense free black man. In one scene, a meeting of the Ku Klux Klan, on its way to get revenge, turns into a silly discussion about the inferior quality of the bags that cover their heads.

Opio Sokoni, MSCJ, J.D. wrote an op-ed piece on the movie entitled "Django: The Real Hero is White," which puts the debate into context, reminding viewers what the real focus should be about. For the full text, download the pdf link at <http://db.tt/V8puOSJb>.

“So, once again Blacks get to learn the lesson that no one can tell their story and/or create their heroes for them. Too many Blacks are so thirsty for heroes that we will take them no matter how flawed the context is or who create them. Factually speaking, Blacks do not need any fictional victories when they have so many real historical heroes to select from - during that same pre-Civil War period.”