

Film Title: **Judas and The Black Messiah**
Reviewer Name: **Josh Webster**
Run Time: **126 minutes**
Film Genre: **Drama/Biography/History**
Director: **Shaka King**
Screenplay: **Will Berson and Shaka King**
Film Rating: **R**
Leading cast members: **Daniel Kaluuya, LaKeith Stanfield, Jesie Plemmons**

Named after an FBI directive aimed at preventing charismatic leaders from rising to prominence in civil rights movements, the film focuses on the figure of Fred Hampton, a Black Panther leader in Chicago whom the FBI and Chicago law enforcement targeted due to his efforts to unite civil rights groups, local gangs and minority community organizations. In addition to fantastic performances by Kaluuya in the role of Hampton and Stanfield in the role of Bill O'Neal, an FBI informant and plant within the Chicago Panthers' organization, the film looks past the general perceptions of Black Panthers to explore the motivations and philosophies informing their work, which extended to police supervision, community programs and education focusing on black history and politics. Additionally, the film sheds light on the divisive and, at times, unlawful tactics used by law enforcement to detain, intimidate, entrap and, in some cases, justify and excuse direct violence against the Panther's membership and individuals associated with other movements. Given the frequent association of civil rights with historic figures, a consideration of Hampton's potential, and its theft, justifies a viewing, regardless of its many other merits. On a final note, those unfamiliar with the history of The Black Panthers may wish to pair a viewing with a reading of

David Walker and Marcus Kwame Anderson's *The Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel History*, which gives a thorough and compelling background.