



The Sammy Davis, Jr. Reader

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The life and times of the last great American hipster

Sammy Davis, Jr. (1925-90) rose from childhood stardom on the vaudeville stage to become one of the most famous African American entertainers of the 1950s and '60s (and the only black member of Frank Sinatra's Rat Pack). At the same time, he spent most of his career surrounded by controversy and ridicule--over his affairs with white film stars like Kim Novak and Jean Seberg; his 1960 marriage to Swedish actress May Britt; his conversion to Judaism; his closeness to the Kennedys and, later, Richard Nixon; and his problems with alcohol and drugs.

Davis comes alive in this collection of writings about him, including a 1966 *Playboy* interview by Alex Haley; an excerpt from the 1983 autobiography of porn star Linda Lovelace; profiles from *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*; and articles from many prominent African American periodicals. The Sammy Davis, Jr. Reader is a composite portrait of a complex, self-conscious man and the society that treated him, for more than forty years, with passionate ambivalence.

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