**Decoding *Queen & Slim*: The Subtle Symbolism That Made the Film Sing**

Because of the movie's title, it's obvious throughout the more than 2-hour long runtime that the people on screen are known as Queen and Slim. But Matsoukas and Waithe made the decision to never refer to them as such throughout the entire film.

"We wanted Queen and Slim to represent all of us," Matsoukas said during the The Weeksville Heritage Center screening. "**All of us women are Queens**, and **Slim** is obviously **a name that Black men are called quite frequently**, and we wanted our community to see themselves reflected in these characters."

In fact, we don't learn the pair's actual names until the end of the movie: they are **Ernest Hinds** and **Angela Johnson**. The former's moniker was dedicated to a notable 1960s Black Panther.

"Queen’s actual name is Angela, for [activist] **Angela Davis**," Matsoukas tells OprahMag.com. "We wanted to build upon the legacy on which our heroes had built—and the fight in which they had struggled through and won."

And there was yet another message underneath that easter egg—particularly when it came to why it took so long for us to hear their names. "We also wanted to speak to how Black bodies and Black lives are often more honored in death than in life," the director says. "And we don't get to know who these people actually are until they're no longer with us."

I couldn't help but notice the Black policeman in question's name tag. And as it turns out, it was another hidden gem dedicated to a certain classic poet."He didn’t have a name [at first]. He was just 'Black cop,'" Waithe tells us. "But then it was some sort of combination of me and Melina, like, 'Oh, let’s call him Langston.' I have a Langston Hughes quote on my arm that says 'I, too, am America.' And also my nephew—I named my nephew for him."

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