

POSITIVE BLACK IMAGES MAGAZINE: ORIGINS

Positive Black Images is a monthly online magazine created by Vernon Heard. It is currently on its 10th issue and counting. PBI was created to counter the negative persona of Black people and Black culture in mainstream media. It was the brainstorm of a self-described computer nerd, musician and web designer who created PBI more out of frustration than social responsibility.



According to Vernon, *“I watched how the media manipulated information in the highly publicized trials of George Zimmerman and Michael Dunn. The images of Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis were retooled in the media to portray the victims, and by extension Black people, as worthless thugs. The last straw for me was reading many online discussion strings where*



non-Blacks supported the media portrayal of Black culture. Many viewed us as welfare- and food stamp-dependent, thieves, freeloaders and drug dealers. It was very frustrating. That’s what motivated me to expand on my website design side business and create Positive Black Images. Black culture is historically one of the most borrowed from by the same people who disrespect it. It is casually appropriated and rebranded all the time and you see it in fashion, advertising, creative arts, sports and even religion. This information is rarely credited or alluded to.”

PBI counters the negative news reports and World Star Hip Hop videos that feed what Vernon calls “The Black Eye”, a theoretical lens that most Black culture is portrayed through. PBI will always address the void of positive information and constructive contributions that Black people bring to the table in society.

Per Vernon, *“Creating a magazine hasn’t always been a dream of mine but it felt so very necessary in light of the constant character assassination of Blacks and Black culture. Some of which, mind you, is from the Black community’s own members.”*

PBI features interviews and articles on positive Black folks, plain and simple. We profile educators, inventors, innovative thinkers, activists, entrepreneurs, authors and anyone who has an inspiring story. The objective is two-fold. A) To show readers, kids and teens especially, a cross section of people and career options that are available to Black youth looking beyond the streets as a lifestyle. And B) to show non-Black readers that there are far more Black people

doing positive things than negative. PBI offers an independent point of reference beyond the 6 o'clock news or intentionally misleading posts on the internet.



PBI has sections on The Black Family, Health and Fitness, Music, Black Educators, Black Authors and Black Innovators that inform and entertain simultaneously. We also feature contributing writers and photographers to ensure we offer different perspectives on popular topics. PBI offers a Black History column sharing obscure historical topics that are not readily publicized and definitely not taught in school. The embedded principle there is that Black History doesn't start with the arrival of Blacks in America but encompasses African history and noteworthy accomplishments outside of the U.S.

[READ: Gabe Sonnier Interview](#)

PBI will occasionally profile Black celebrities but our focus will be more on average Black families and individuals that are fulfilling their dreams. Be that raising intact OR broken families, achieving educational goals, running their own businesses, taking a positive role in their communities or just being day to day citizens. We illustrate that Black folks are normal people who don't equate to predisposed notions and expectations fueled by the mainstream media. We shouldn't have to do it, but we do it. God bless us on this journey.

#positiveblack



I M A G E S

Also reference the Vernon Heard interview in the December issue of Positive Black here:

<http://www.positiveblack.org/#!vernon-heard-dec-14/c12aw>