



Publisher's Statement

John H. Johnson
Editor and Publisher

EBONY is a magazine of leadership and definition. We cover the whole Black world — Black males and females, youths and adults, Black scholars, athletes, entertainers, ministers, and business leaders. We believe it is our duty to define that world to itself and to other worlds. We believe the first definitive analysis of new and urgent issues in that world should appear in EBONY first.

This special issue, like the preceding special issues, is a leadership issue which breaks new ground by presenting the first definitive analysis of an urgent national problem — The Crisis of the Black Male. It is an editorial response to underground rumblings we detected in hundreds of letters from our readers. These letters — angry, anguished, tearful, pleading — come from males and females, from youths and adults, from the North and the South. They cited alarming statistics on the mortality, unemployment and homicide rates of Black males. They said, almost without exception, that something strange and ominous is happening to Black males in this country and that someone should sound the alarm before it is too late.

This issue sounds the alarm within a broader context which stresses the enduring strengths of Black men who have borne the brunt of a 300-year struggle and who stand today at a crossroads of destiny. It is our view that the profile of the contemporary Black male presents the paradoxical picture of unprecedented challenges and unprecedented opportunities. We take the position that it is impossible to understand the challenges, which are real, without some understanding of the opportunities, which are also real, and the stories that never make the headlines, the stories, as Ruby Dee says in this issue, "of all those Black men who overwhelm the ugly statistics and the negative assessments with their grace, and style and elegance of spirit." The images of assertive Black males operating on new levels of power and creativity — of a Harold Washington and a Tom Bradley in politics, of an Admiral Hacker and a General Robinson in the armed forces, of a Charles Fuller and a Stevie Wonder in the arts — are tokens and testaments of a Black male tradition of endurance and excellence which is still alive and well in America.

This is an issue about the enduring tradition and the continuing challenge. It calls White America to the task of dealing with the fundamental cause of the Black male crisis — unemployment. It calls Black America, and especially Black males, to the task of creating new structures — Big Brother programs, "Each One Teach One" projects — to save and guide beleaguered Black youths. It calls us all, males and females, Blacks and Whites, to a deeper understanding of the depth and richness of the Black male tradition of excellence and endurance and service.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which reads "John H. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.