

The **MUSIC ISSUE** | THE **25** HOTTEST ARTISTS OF 2011

# EBONY

NEW SOUND,  
NEW LOOK,

New  
**Jill!**

After a painful split from her fiancé and a brutal break with her label, the singer opens up about her bright future

SUMMER  
**HAIR**  
SPECIAL  
**50**  
Hot Cut & Color Ideas

**Black Men\***  
Get Real About Black Women

A NO-HOLDS-BARRED CONVERSATION

\*Names have been changed to protect the guilty

EXCLUSIVE

**Uptown Records**  
The Rise and Fall of Hip-Hop's Most Influential Label

JUNE 2011  
USA \$3.99 CANADA \$4.99  
A JOHNSON PUBLICATION  
WWW.EBONY.COM





THE STATE *of* TODAY'S

# BLACK MEN

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hen I was asked to be guest editor for EBONY's annual issue on Black men, I was initially concerned, wondering if this was going to be another exposé on the horrors of being an African-American man. Or another look at a series of statistics that justify the doom-and-gloom forecast of this endangered species. I was assured that this issue was about the state of Black men in America, but not the kind of headline topics that lack a depth of context, failing to focus on what is next. ¶ It is not difficult to accept the fact that the condition of African-American men is treacherous. There are statistics that

report record high dropout rates, overwhelmingly negative images of Blacks in popular culture and elected officials often more interested in pontificating sound bytes than passing sound policy. ¶ Regardless of the numbers, it is important for the African-American community to move beyond the psychosis of rhetorical

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PHOTOGRAPHS *By* JAMEL SHABAZZ

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**HOODWINKED BY JANKS MORTON** If I can give Black America one teachable lesson, it would be this: "Never trust a man who quotes a statistic that ends in either a five or a zero." For example, "25 percent of this, 50 percent of that or 75 percent of these" are usually opinion or conjecture, and seldom, if ever, valid. Too often in our discourse, we combine the economic, the educational, employment and social statistics to form a distorted perception of the modern-era African-American experience. Included here are some verified statistics on African-American males regarding education, economics and employment. Enjoy. >







acrobatics over relevant action and recognize its own potential to solve some of the issues it is facing. For the past decade, I have been working with national organizations and local citizens to improve access to education, ensuring maximum involvement in the electoral process and maximizing the power of the faith community.

I am excited about the work being done by the individuals and organizations featured here: researcher Janks Morton takes the same statistics used to report our dysfunction and breaks them down into the silver-lining scenario we so badly need; David Banks' Eagle Academy in New York preparing young men to be future leaders; and the students of Chicago's Hales Franciscan High School examining their role *in* media and *as* media. We will take a look at

**"IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW YOU WHAT SOME MEN ARE DOING DAY IN AND DAY OUT TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR ALL OF US."**

brothers who personify the legacy of Black intellectuals and servants from generations past, and debunk many myths regarding the low-achieving Black man.

We will introduce you to architects in the areas of education, faith, media and politics who are building new institutions and/or infrastructure to benefit not just the Black community but society at large.

We will even give you insight into what Black men think about relationships and Black women. This is not an attempt to paint a picture that shows African-American men as monolithic—it is an opportunity to show you what some men are doing day in and day out to make life better for all of us. They are moving to make the difference alone (if no one will roll with them) or with anyone who will move with them to make real change happen.

This issue is dedicated to highlighting the men who are working outside the box, inside and outside institutions. These stories provide examples of what is possible and who has beaten the odds to create the change others are simply talking about.

Meet EBONY's game changers and get a glimpse of what we all have the capacity to do if we decide to use our gifts to serve.

—Jeff Johnson

# THE AGENTS



## MEDIA Unstereotyping Brothers

CHEO TYEHIMBA TAYLOR AND HIS PLAN TO REMAKE THE IMAGE OF THE BLACK MALE

See a Black man on your local nightly news, and chances are it's not because of his good deeds (unless he hit the winning shot in last night's game). In fact, media stereotypes of African-American men have gotten so out of control, Cheo Tyehimba Taylor felt compelled to do something about it: He created Game Changer to speak to some of the biases in the media and help to reframe Black male images.

"There is a vacuum there that I plan to change."

Taylor, a self-proclaimed "recovering journalist who got tired of arguing and battling with editors about how Black men were portrayed"—either with stereotypes, misrepresentations or not at all, says that journalism needs to be pressured to live up to its creed.

"Corporate media distill stories into a very neat box, then it is packaged and sold to their audience. My training told me that there was a very distinct

line between editorial and advertising. But I found out that that line is very flexible. And the image of the Black male has suffered as a result. We are focusing on our assets, not our deficits."

Game Changer has already produced documentaries that have gone viral, and even been picked up by prominent news Web sites. Taylor hopes to continue producing videos that shine a positive light on Black men and that play a part in training a next generation of filmmakers.